

Christian Dogmatics.

by
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[First volume:](#)

Essence and Concept of Theology. The Holy Scriptures.
The Doctrines of God. The Creation of the World and of
Man. Divine Providence. The Angels. The Doctrines of
Man before the Fall and after the Fall.



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Foreword.

With the appearance of this volume, my *Christian Dogmatics* is now available in full printing. It has been publicly asked why the second and third volumes appeared first. The reason is that the wish was expressed that in the great jubilee year of 1917, the volume in which the doctrines of God's grace in Christ, of Christ's person and work, and of justification are presented should be printed first. The second volume was naturally followed by the third volume, in which the consequences of the Christian doctrine of justification are described.

In the present volume, the first two chapters, "The Nature and Concept of Theology" and "The Holy Scriptures," occupy more than half of the space. This is explained by the fact that in modern Protestant theology un-Christian conceptions of the nature and concept of theology have become established. But this is only the necessary consequence of the apostasy from the Christian truth that the Holy Scriptures are God's own infallible Word. As we have before us in the Roman Church a complete collapse of Christian theology in principle, because there the subjective view of the Pope is the all-determining power, so now we have the same state of affairs in modern Protestant theology, because the latter has abandoned the objective divine authority of Holy Scriptures and has taken refuge in the "Christian experience," that is, in the subjective view of "the theologizing subject." This explains, as said, the detailed treatment of the

both of the first two chapters. In the doctrine of God, the difference between the natural and the Christian knowledge of God had to be explained in more detail, because modern theology, even in circles calling themselves Lutheran, has become dynamic-Unitarian. In the doctrine of man, the doctrine of sin required longer expositions at several points, because modern theology has come to the concept of "guiltless sin" from its ego standpoint in a Roman-Zwinglian manner. In order to remain in the necessary contact with the present, it was therefore necessary to emphasize certain parts in this volume.

On the other hand, a special explanation or apology is needed, why a longer explanation is inserted on [p. 182](#) ff. which actually does not belong in a dogmatic. It is about the accusation, raised especially from Germany also in dogmatic writings, that within the Missouri Synod a "Repristination Theology" is cultivated, which must be regarded as an evil in the Christian Church. Our theology, it is claimed, as a result of the "identification" of Scripture and the Word of God, leads to an "intellectualism" in which living "heart Christianity" cannot properly arise. Following this criticism, and in order to possibly remove the fear of "Repristination Theology", I had to describe at length how things are in our church fellowship, which is devoted to "Repristination Theology". In order to remain historically correct, I could not conceal the further fact that the theology deplored at the Missouri Synod is cultivated with clear consciousness in other church fellowships as well. I refer to Dr. Hönecke's very detailed [Ev.-Luth. Dogmatik](#), from which it is clear that the doctrinal position of the Synod of Wisconsin and others completely coincides with the doctrinal position of the Missouri Synod. In this excursus are further found

(p. 199 ff.) some quotations from a writing published by Franz Delitzsch in 1839 for the tercentenary of the Reformation in the city of Leipzig. The purpose of these quotations is to prove that the American Lutheran Church of "strict confessional trend" has preserved, brought to clear exposition and practically applied what God gave now almost a hundred years ago also in Germany. Delitzsch says — to take some of his sentences over into this preface —: "I confess, without being ashamed, that in matters of faith I am 300 years behind, because I have recognized after long insanity that the truth is only one, and that an eternal, unchangeable one, and, because revealed by God, in need of no sifting and improvement." "I preach backwardness to you, namely, to the Word of God, from which you have fallen." "What I have pronounced and sought to defend is nothing other than the faith of the Old Lutheran Church, to which our forefathers confessed 300 years ago on the holy feast of Pentecost with fervent prayer of thanksgiving." And Delitzsch did not stand alone. The author of this dogmatics had already read some smaller writings of [Ernst Sartorius](#) as a student, later as a pastor and also still as a teacher of theology with great interest and true joy of heart. These are writings [Religion ausserhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft](#) ["Religion outside the limits of mere reason"] (1822), *Die Unwissenschaftlichkeit und innere Verwandtschaft des Rationalismus und Romanismus* ["The unscientificity and inner affinity of rationalism and Romanism"] (1825), *Von dem religiösen Erkenntnisprinzip* ["Of the religious principle of knowledge"] (1826). In these writings, the right kind of Christian theology is dogmatically pointed out even more clearly than in Delitzsch. Modern German theology should not be deterred from reading these and other writings from Germany's revival period of a hundred years ago by the fact that the authors of them, under the pressure of an unscientific

theological science, later themselves deviated from the truth testified to.

In the present volume, too, I have endeavored to give a factual account. Where sharp expressions have been used in some places, they seemed to be demanded by the importance of the matter under discussion. It was necessary to make it clear that a theology which seeks to draw and standardize Christian doctrine not from the Holy Scriptures alone, but from the Ego of the theologizing individual, is neither Christian nor scientific, but the opposite of both. That I know a theological inconsistency, according to which there is the possibility that someone believes differently in his heart and before God than he writes in his writings, is also repeatedly expressed in this volume.

We American Lutherans of "strictly confessional trend" have not the slightest cause to exalt ourselves above others. We would certainly be swimming in the same perverse stream if God's grace had not placed us in quite different church relationships. We — the second and third generation — have been trained theologically under the most favorable relationships imaginable. We were acquainted not only with the theology of the ancient church, the Reformation and the dogmatists, but also with the nature and results of modern theology. In addition, our teachers continued to admonish us not to substitute any human authority, not even the authority of Luther and the symbolic books, for the divine authority of Scripture. The admonition in the last year of study was: "Let none of you enter the ministry who still has doubts about the Scriptural validity of any doctrine of the Lutheran symbols. If anyone still has doubts, talk frankly with any of his teachers." Even from the very first sermon of

in the first year of study, all theological phrases and rhetoric that sounded learned were ruthlessly eliminated and cut away on the grounds that the *usus didacticus* of the Holy Scriptures stood in the first place. It is important to teach and preach in such a way that, as far as the pastor is concerned, through the unabridged sermon of the Law the secure are frightened out of their carnal security and the frightened consciences are assured of God's grace and salvation through the unvarnished gospel (*satisfactio vicaria*). The fact that we had enemies all around us at all times, from Rome, the enthusiastic sects and unfaithful Lutherans down to the Unitarians and the anti-Christian lodges, had to serve us best. This struggle forced us to continue our intensive study of Christian doctrines in the individual congregations, in the pastoral conferences and in the Synod conventions. Admittedly, we would have to be blind if we did not also see the weaknesses that have always been inherent in our church fellowship. We have had and still have difficulties in carrying out or maintaining the right practice in individual congregations. We have also experienced secessions that have humbled us deeply. On the other hand, we are certain by God's grace that the doctrine that is in force among us is the Christian doctrine revealed in Scripture and testified to in the Lutheran Confessions, and therefore must lay claim to sole authority. From this point of view, this *Christian Dogmatics* also wants to be judged in its thetical as well as in its antithetical explanations.

Soli Deo Gloria!

St. Louis, Mo. in April 1924.

F. Pieper.

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Essence and concept of theology.

(De Natura et Constitutione Theologiae.)

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Misprint.

Misprint in Volume I.

- P. 10, Z. 7 v. o., read Christian religion instead of Christian religions.
 P. 91, Z. 3 v. o., insert *articulum* before *omnium fundamentalissimum*.
 P. 140, line 21 v. o., read *certum* instead of *certus*.
 P. 280, Z. 11 v: u., read Spiritual Forces instead of God's Forces.
 P. 536, line 19 v. u., read negatives instead of positives.

Misprint in Volume II.

- P. 6, line 3 v. o., read *salvifica* instead of *salvifiva*.
 S. 7, Z. 7 v. u., read Tit. 3, 4 instead of Rom. 3, 4.
 P. 56, Z. 6 v. u., read Rom. 5, 10 instead of Rom. 5, 9.
 P. 205, line 12 v. o., read in space instead of a space.
 p. 459, last line v. u., read the former instead of the latter.
 P. 520, Z. 9 v. o., read 1 Cor. 6, 17 instead of 1 Cor. 6, 18.
 p. 574, line 5 v. u., read ἀνδρός instead of ἀνθρός.

Misprint in Volume III.

- p. 409, note 1318, read Rückert instead of Rückart.
 p. 410, line 7 v. o., read αἵματί μου instead of αἵματί μου.
 P. 483, Z. 11 v. o., read 1 Cor. 16, 19 instead of 1 Cor. 16, 10.
 S. 561, Z. 13 v. o., read Acts 13, 46 instead of Acts 13, 48.

Letter and punctuation errors that are easy to correct are not listed here. Please also note the corrections in Vol. II, p. XII, and Vol. III, p. X.

Nature and concept of theology. ^ _

(De natura et constitutione theologiae.)

1. The understanding of the standpoint. ^ _

Given the situation in the Church of the present day, an understanding of the theological standpoint is necessary. The standpoint from which this dogmatics was written is the conviction that the Holy Scriptures, in specific distinction from all other books that exist elsewhere in the world, are God's own infallible Word and therefore the only source and norm of doctrine that a Christian dogmatics has to present. There was a time when, within the Christian Church, this point of view was not questioned at all, except for a few exceptions. This time reaches into the first half of the eighteenth century. Since then, and especially in the present, the situation has changed to the extent that what was once the rule has now become the exception, as far as the public teachers are concerned. The public teachers, who are known in wider circles and are regarded as representatives of the Protestant theology of the present day, deny almost without exception that the Holy Scriptures are God's own Word by inspiration. They also, therefore, refuse to regard and use the Holy Scriptures as the sole source and standard of theology. A general flight from the allegedly unreliable Holy Scriptures into one's own human ego has set in, euphemistically called "Christian faith consciousness," "born-again ego," "experience," and so on. Due to this loose-from-the-Scriptures movement, a state of affairs has occurred within modern Protestantism which has its analogue in the Roman Church. As in the Roman Church not the Holy Scriptures but the "I" of the Pope is finally the only source and norm of doctrine, as the one who has "all rights in the shrine of his heart,"¹⁾ so also the modern Protestant theologians want to draw and norm Christian doctrine not from the Holy

1) Schmalk. Art. M. 321, 4 [Smalc. Art., [Concordia Triglotta, 495. 4](#) ].

Scriptures, but from the "pious self-consciousness of the dogmatizing subject," ²⁾ . As in the papacy only so much is valid of Scripture as the pope acknowledges and confirms, so the newer Protestant theology wants to allow only that to be valid in Scripture which the pious theologizing subject declares worthy of acceptance. This is an accurate description of the state of affairs when we look at the bulk of the newer theologians who do not "identify" Scripture and the Word of God, and therefore do not want to draw and standardize Christian doctrine from Scripture but from within themselves. Thus the order of things in the Christian church is not merely shifted, but turned upside down. We are dealing with a real revolution against the divine order in the Christian church.

In contrast, we fully uphold the position that the Holy Scriptures, through the unique divine act of inspiration, are God's own infallible Word, "God's Book," ³⁾ from which alone, until the Last Day, Christian doctrine is to be drawn and standardized in all its parts. And for this standpoint we do not ask apology, but assert it as the only correct one. This standpoint has great examples in itself. First, the normative example of Christ and his holy apostles. For these, as is to be detailed in the doctrine of Holy Scriptures, consistently "identified" Scripture and the Word of God: Γέγραπται, *Scriptura sacra locuta, res decisa est*. For this point of view we also have the normative example of the Reformer of the Church, Luther. When Luther says, "The word they shall let stand," he means the word of Holy Scriptures. Hence Luther's reminder to all readers of Scripture, including theologians — and them in particular: "You shall thus act with Scripture, that you think as God Himself speaks." ⁴⁾ Hence Luther's somewhat crudely expressed warning to us theological teachers that we will become "monsters" (*portenta*) of theologians like the scholastics if we depart from Scripture, because it, Scripture, "alone is the source of all wisdom [in theology]." ⁵⁾ Admittedly, in the present day it is very generally and in part also very decisively asserted that Luther was a

2) Expression in [Nitzsch-Stephan, Lehrbuch d. Ev. Dogmatik 3, 1912, p. 13.](#)

3) Luther's naming of Scripture. [St. L. IX, 1071.](#)

4) Sermons on the Genesis, 1527. [St. L. III, 21.](#)

5) *Exeg. opp. Lat. Ed. Erl.* IV, 328. [St. L. I, 1289 f.](#)

"freer" position on Scripture than the later Lutheran theologians. But this assertion, where it is made *bona fide*, is based on ignorance of the historical facts, as is to be shown in the Doctrine of Holy Scriptures.

As is well known, the modern theologians, who substitute their own pious consciousness for Scripture as the source and norm of theology, claim that it is precisely their pious self-consciousness and their "sense of reality," sharply developed by the newer science, that prevent them from identifying Scripture and the Word of God. We will be allowed to set "experience" against "experience" and "sense of reality" against "sense of reality". For our part, we experience it with millions of Christians, and by God's grace we may still continue to experience it, that the Holy Scriptures are truly the Word of God. And this experience is conveyed to us for the written Word of the apostles just as it was conveyed to the hearts of the Corinthian Christians with regard to the oral proclamation of the apostle Paul.⁶⁾ Because the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God, they do not wait for the Pope or any other theologizing individual to recognize and confirm them, but they obtain recognition for themselves through the production of faith as a result of the action of the Holy Spirit, which is bound to the Word, just as the works of God in the realm of nature testify to themselves as divine, without having to wait for confirmation on the part of the representatives of the natural sciences. On the other hand, the newer theologians, who are fleeing from the Scriptures, move in the field of self-deception and pass by the knowledge of truth, because they want to move faith away from its ground of origin and knowledge and let it rise directly from their own inner being. That there is self-deception in this is certain because Christ very clearly and certain binds the knowledge of truth to abiding in his Word: "If ye continue in my word", ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῷ ἐμῷ ... γνώσεσθε τὴν ἀλήθειαν ["ye shall know the truth"], Jn. 8:31-32. If, then, as theological teachers we wish to know and teach not error but truth, we must abide in Christ's word, which we have in the word of his apostles until the Last Day, as Christ likewise instructs us very clearly when he says Jn. 17:20 that all

6) 1 Cor. 2:1-5.

will believe in Him through the apostles' word (διὰ λόγον αὐτῶν). Therefore, in theology it is not necessary to flee from the word of the apostles and prophets into the theological ego, but in theology everything depends on the fact that the theologizing human ego gets rid of itself. And this happens only in such a way that the theologian carefully suppresses all his own thoughts and views that come to him, and only allows such thoughts, speeches, and doctrines to have a home in him that are expressed in Christ's Word. And this is not unworthy "bondage" and "literal service," as has been thought, but this is our glorious freedom which we may enjoy as Christian theologians. Christ also instructs us about this John 8 when he says, "If ye abide in my words ... ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," ἡ ἀλήθεια ἐλευθερώσει ὑμᾶς. The most ignominious bondage of man that exists in the world is being a prisoner of one's own erroneous thoughts. Deliverance from this bondage of one's own erroneous thoughts in matters pertaining to our own and all men's salvation is the purpose for which Christ has given us his own word through his apostles and prophets. So do not get rid of the Scriptures, but go to the Scriptures and to them alone as the source and norm of theology! Luther thanks God for having given him the grace to let all thoughts that had come to him "without Scripture" fall away again.

How bad the situation is for a theology that has gotten away from the Scriptures and has settled in the area of "pious faith consciousness" is also clearly evident in its results. A sad product of this theology is the denial of the *satisfactio Christi vicaria*. Hofmann, who has been called the father of Ego theology among the conservative Lutheran theologians of the nineteenth century, also very definitely denied the vicarious satisfaction of Christ. And now the denial of *satisfactio vicaria* is almost as common as the denial of the inspiration of Holy Scriptures. And here lies the deepest reason for the fact that the Holy Scriptures are not recognized as Christ's Word. He who denies the *satisfactio vicaria* does not know the Christ whom the Scriptures teach;⁷⁾ and inasmuch as anyone does not know Christ, he cannot know Christ's Word, as Christ Himself says.⁸⁾ We do not deny personal Christianity to every theologian who speaks

7) Jn. 1:29; Matt. 20:28 etc.

8) Jn. 8:43, 47.

against *satisfactio vicaria* from the safety of his study table or lectern. Luther also points out a possible "happy inconsistency" when he says of the theologians whom Erasmus brought against him that they spoke differently *inter disputandum* than their hearts stood before God.⁹⁾ But consequently there is a connection between the denial of Christ's vicarious satisfaction and the rejection of Scripture as the Word of Christ, just as consequently there is a causal nexus between the knowledge of Christ as the Savior of sinners and the knowledge of Scripture as the Word of Christ. This is to be further elaborated in the doctrine of the Scriptures.

Another evil consequence of subjectivism [*ichtheology*] is the doctrinal confusion that has occurred wherever modern theology has succeeded in moving the church away from its doctrinal foundation, the word of the apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:20), and placing it on an ego basis. It is true that the opinion has been expressed that unity in doctrine is possible even after the divine authority of Scripture has been abandoned. The "purely subjective" "ideas" would betray themselves as such and be repelled by the "church common spirit". But in the same paper it is referred to that the extensive agreement in the new dogmatic principles is bound "with an almost infinite abundance of diversities in the application of these principles, as caused sometimes more by the religious individuality of the dogmatist, sometimes more by the degree of his scientific consistency."¹⁰⁾ This obvious and admitted divergence in doctrine found in the modern-theological camp can be resisted in only one way. Theologians must leave the ego base and return to the foundation on which the whole Christian Church is built, namely, on the word of Christ's apostles and prophets, on Christ's word, on Holy Scriptures. Then our doctrines, those of us who call ourselves Christian theologians, will be shaped as Luther describes: "This we may do, provided we are also holy and have the Holy Spirit, that we catechumens and disciples of the prophets may boast, as which we repeat and preach what we have heard and learned from the prophets and apostles, and are also certain that the prophets taught it. That is said

9) Opp. v. a. VII, 166. [St. L. XVIII, 1730.](#)

10) [Nitzsch-Stephan, Dogmatik, p. 13](#) and [IX.](#)

in the Old Testament of the 'prophets' children,' who set nothing of their own nor new, as the prophets did, but teach that which they have from the prophets."¹¹⁾ From this point of view, this *Christian Dogmatics* was written.

2. Religion in general. ^

The derivation of the Latin word *religio* from a root word (etymology) is known to be disputed to this day. The linguistically competent Latinists themselves, whether heathens or Christians, represent different derivations.¹²⁾ We can leave the etymological question undecided without damage to the matter, namely without suffering a loss of our religious knowledge, because the meaning of a word is determined in the last instance not by etymology, but by the use of language (*usus loquendi*).¹³⁾

11) Exposition of the Last Words of David, 2 Sam. 23:3. [St. L. III, 1890](#). E. A. 37, 12.

12) The heathen [Cicero](#) wants to derive *religio* from *relegere* or *religere* in the sense of *diligently* or *carefully* pursue (*diligenter retractare*). *De Nat. Deorum* 2, 28: *Qui omnia, quae ad cultum deorum pertinerent, diligenter retractarent et tamquam relegerent, sunt dicti religiosi ex relegendo, ut elegantes ex eligendo, tamquam a diligendo diligentes, ex intelligendo intelligentes*. The Christian [Lactantius](#), in explicit contrast to Cicero, advocates the derivation of *religare* in the sense of: to bind to God, to commit to Him. *Inst. Div.* 4, 28: *Hac conditione gignimur, ut generanti nos deo iusta et debita obsequia praebeamus, hunc solum noverimus, hunc sequamur. Hoc vinculo pietatis obstricti deo et religati sumus, unde ipsa religio nomen accepit, non, ut Cicero interpretatus est, a religendo*. [Augustine](#) vacillates between *religere* and *religare*, as can be seen from a comparison of *De Civ. Dei* 10, 4 and *De Vera Relig.* c. 55. Most older Lutheran theologians prefer the derivation from *religare*: [Quenstedt](#), *Systema*, 1715, I, 28; Hollaz, *Examen Proleg.* II, qu. 2. Detailed enumeration of the various derivations in Calov, *Isag.* I, 275 sqq, quoted in [Baier-Walther 1, 14](#). More recent theologians and philologists divide into the derivations already mentioned and add others about which one can read in the larger encyclopedias. Very detailed in [Voigt, Fundamentaldogmatik, pp. 1-30](#).

13) [H. Ebeling](#), *Wörterbuch zum N. T.*, III, Einl., cites as a recognized axiom: "Etymology usually throws some light on the word to be explained, but rarely covers the common linguistic meaning of the same." Ebeling himself adds, "The basic meaning can seldom be established completely unobjectionably and indisputably, and the historical development of meanings and language usage is independent of etymology and basic meaning. [Luther](#) also remarks on this point (Opp. exeg. Lat. VIII, 69): *Aliud*


But also the use of language does not help us to achieve the general concept of religion so eagerly sought in our time, which is to bring Christianity and the non-Christian religions under a common *genus*. Admittedly, the use of the word "religion" is common to heathens and Christians. Naturally, however, the heathens bind pagan, the Christians Christian concepts with the word, and these concepts immediately turn out to be completely opposite on closer examination.

Because the heathen do not know the gospel of Christ,¹⁴⁾ but still have a knowledge of God's law,¹⁵⁾ all religious thoughts of the heathen are in the area of the law. They understand religion to be the human effort to make the deity gracious to them through their own actions or works (worship, sacrifices, moral endeavors, asceticism, etc.), that is, they understand religion to be a religion of the law. With regard to this definition of the pagan religions, there is quite general agreement in ancient and modern times.¹⁶⁾ Christians, on the other hand, understand by religion the very opposite, namely, faith in the gospel, that is, faith in the divine message that God is

est grammaticae (Luther also includes the etymological consideration of a word), *aliud Latine loqui. Ideo non tam sermonis grammatici et regulati quam phrasium* (language use) *habenda est ratio. ... In Latin lingua multa vocabula usu in alienam a grammaticis regulis significationem degenerarunt.*

14) 1 Cor. 2:6-10: ἐπὶ καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἀνέβη. ["neither have entered into the heart of man"]


15) Rom. 1:32: τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιγινόντες; Rom. 2:15: ἐνδείκνυται τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτόν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν.


16) Karl Stange, *Moderne Probleme*, 1910, p. 183 f.: "The pagan religion has its peculiarity in this, that it knows only human events for the reconciliation of God." "The normal way of pagan religion is always that man seeks to overcome the consciousness of sin by endeavoring to make amends for his sin." Luthardt (*Glaubenslehre*, 1898, p. 467): "This is the characteristic of paganism, that here all the relationship of God and man is regarded in terms of performance, i.e., according to the point of view of labor activity." So correctly also Ihmels, *Aus der Kirche*, p. 52. Likewise the Lutheran Confession, Apology (M. 134, 144 [*Trigl.*, 197, 144 ]): *Opera incurrunt hominibus in oculos. Haec naturaliter miratur humana ratio, et quia tantum opera cernit, fidem non intelligit neque considerat, ideo somniat, haec opera mereri remissionem peccatorum et iustificare. Haec opinio legis haeret naturaliter in animis hominum, neque excuti potest, nisi quum divinitus docemur.*

already reconciled to all men through Christ's vicarious satisfaction (*satisfactio vicaria*). "Knowing" (εἰδότες) — says Paul in the name of all Christians — "that man is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ, we also believe in Jesus Christ, that we may be justified by faith in Jesus Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh is justified."¹⁷⁾ Even if there are religious parties within external Christianity who still allow the reconciliation of man with God to come about wholly or in part through human activity, they thereby fall back on the pagan concept of religion and stand outside Christianity with regard to their religion. "Ye have lost Christ, who would be justified by the law, and are fallen from grace."¹⁸⁾

3. The number of religions in the world. ^

If we ask about the number of essentially different religions, it is already clear from the above explanation that there are not a thousand,¹⁹⁾ nor four,²⁰⁾ but only two essentially different religions in the world: the religion of the Law, that is, the effort to reconcile with God by way of one's own human works, and the religion of the Gospel,

17) Gal. 2:16. The Apology (M. 188, 19 [[Trigl. 287, 19](#) Fide consequimur remissionem peccatorum propter Christ, non propter nostra opera praecedentia aut sequentia.

18) Gal. 5:4: Κατηργήθητε από τον Χριστόν (you are — with regard to your relationship to Christ — turned away, loose from Christ, have no fellowship with him; cf. Cremer sub καταργεῖν), οἵτινες ἐν νόμῳ δικαιοῦσθε (you who stand in the opinion that you are justified by the law), της χάριτος ἐξεπέσατε. Correct Meyer e. St.: "Justification by the law and justification for Christ's sake are namely *opposita* (works — faith), so that the one excludes the other." Luther therefore does not exaggerate when he says in the Large Catechism (M. 458, 56 [[Trigl. 693, 56](#) 

19) For example, Meyer, [Großes Konversationslexikon](#) 6, XVI, 784.

20) The pagan, Jewish, Mohammedan and Christian religions. This enumeration is also found now and then in Lutheran catechisms, in that the essential content of the religions mentioned is not considered as well as their historical appearance in the world. But this is also historically not correct in so far as the Christian religion came into existence with the promise of the female seed as the redemption of mankind.

that is, the faith wrought by the Holy Spirit through the gospel, that we have a gracious God through the reconciliation made through Christ, without works of our own (χωρίς ἔργων νόμον).

The duality of the religions, seen in their essential nature, is clearly taught throughout the Scriptures, as will be explained in more detail below. The duality is already evident from the fact that the Christian religion has the task of superseding all other religions. The missionary command addressed to the Christian church is of a thoroughly universal nature: μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη,²¹⁾ and therefore denies the right to exist not merely to some, but to all other religions, with the added reason that all religions, with the exception of the Christian, are practically worthless, namely, that they leave men in darkness and in Satan's power. It is said in the purpose statement of Christianity as a world religion: "to open their eyes, that they (Jews and heathen) may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, to receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance with them that are sanctified, through faith that is in me," namely Christ (πίστει τῇ εἰς ἐμέ, scil. εἰς Χριστόν).²²⁾

21) Matt. 28:19. So also abundantly already in the prophecies of the Old Testament. Ps. 2:8: "I will give you the heathen for an inheritance, and the end of the world for a possession." Gen. 49:10; Ps. 72:8 etc. Is. 49:6 (Christ the "light of the heathen" and "God's salvation" until the end of the world).

22) Acts 26:18. Cf. Luther's powerful exposition on Is. 9:2 f., that all intellectual and moral aspirations of the heathen and the unbelieving Jews burden the men in desolate darkness. St. L. VI, 106 ff. Irrig Lechler-Schäffer on Acts 26:18 in Lange's commentary: "The purpose of his (the apostle Paul's) mission is stated in such a manner that it can be understood only as referring to Gentiles." In contrast, Meyer is correct: Εἰς οὓς is not to be referred merely to τῶν ἐθνῶν, but from τον λαον και τῶν ἐθνῶν together, "which is demanded by the pragmatic relationship v. 19. 20." V. 20 Paul himself reports how he understood Christ's command, namely, that he immediately preached repentance and conversion to God to Jews and heathens. Of course, not only the conversion from darkness to light, but also the conversion from the power of Satan to God refers equally to the heathen and the unbelieving Jews. Here again Meyer has at first the right relation to both classes. But when, with respect to the conversion "from the power of Satan to God," he adds, limitingly, that it "takes into account with predominant relation the heathen, who are ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, Eph. 2:12, under the power of Satan, the ἀρκὼν τον

In order to eliminate this diametrical contrast between Christianity and all other religions and thus the duality of the essentially different religions, one searches especially in recent times for a "general concept of religion". By this, as has already been said, one understands a concept of religion that is so broad and comprehensive that it expresses the essence not only of the pagan religions but also of the Christian religions, thus including the non-Christian religions and the Christian religion under one *genus*. But a closer examination of the definitions of religion, in which one finds expressed a general concept of religion encompassing Christianity and paganism, lets us see clearly that one uses only one common expression, while the thing denoted remains completely different, as long as one holds fast the basic fact of Christianity, namely the reconciliation of the world through Christ's *satisfactio vicaria*. Karl Hase has rightly reminded us of "verbal definitions" of religion, in which the essence of the Christian religion is overlooked.²³⁾

This is to be illustrated by some examples. We do not get beyond the duality of the religions, if we define "religion in general" as the "personal relationship of man to God". This definition is at present quite generally accepted. Thus Macpherson says, "The common element in all religions is the recognition of a relation between men and God."²⁴⁾ Likewise Luthardt: "However different the designations for what we call religion may be, in all of them a relationship to the Godhead, albeit a more or less inward and personal one, is expressed. And this we may well call the general concept of religion."²⁵⁾ But "relationship" is a mere abstraction. As soon as we become concrete, that is, as soon as we examine the actual or historical relationship of men to God according to its quality, we are immediately confronted with the fact that the "relationship" is twofold. In all people who want to reconcile God through their own actions,

κόσμου τούτου, Eph. 2:2", the "with predominant relation" could be omitted, since Paul refers what he says about the heathen in Eph. 2:1. 2, v. 3 and 4 explicitly also to the Jews.

23) Hutterus redivivus 10, p. 11.

24) Christian Dogmatics; Edinburgh 1898, p. 10.

25) Glaubenslehre; 1898, p. 34.

we encounter the personal relationship of evil conscience before God or, what is the same, the sensation of divine wrath and thus also the relationship of hopelessness. The reason for this is that those men who seek to reconcile God by their own actions strive in vain; for, "By the works of the law no flesh is justified before God."²⁶⁾ With this, experience is also true. The Scripture records in Eph. 2:12, not merely of some, but of all the heathen without distinction, that "in those days," when they were heathen, they had no hope, and were without God in the world, ἐλπίδα μη εχοντες καί ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ. Nor did their abundantly offered sacrifices change their "Personal Relationship with God" in the least, because their sacrifices were not offered to God, but to demons, α θύει τὰ ἐθνη, δαιμονίοις θύει καί ον θεῳ,²⁷⁾ The personal relationship of the heathen, then, in all religious endeavors, is and remains a relationship of evil conscience and hopelessness. The same is true, of course, of all those who, within external Christianity, seek to regulate their relationship with God in the way of their own works. Of them also it is true, "They that deal in the works of the law (οι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου) are under the curse."²⁸⁾ With Christians, on the other hand, through faith in the reconciliation wrought by Christ, the "personal relationship with God" is the relationship of good conscience or certainty of grace, and thus also the personal relationship of the hope of eternal life, which God has promised to give to all believers in Christ. This *status quo* among Christians is reported experientially by the Apostle Paul in the words, "Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ... and boast of the future glory which God is to give," and, "We also boast of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation."²⁹⁾ So it remains the duality of essentially different religions, even if we also define "religion in general" as "the personal relationship of man to God".

The same is true of the much-used formula according to which "religion in general" is defined as the way of

26) Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:16. 27) 1 Cor. 10:20.

28) Gal. 3:10. 29) Rom. 5:1, 2, 11.

of worshipping God (*ratio Deum colendi sive Deo serviendi*). As soon as we begin to examine the actual ways of worshipping God for their essence, their essential difference immediately becomes apparent. Christians worship God as the God who is gracious to them without the works of the law for the sake of Christ's vicarious satisfaction, and to whom they therefore offer their works not as a ransom for their sins but as a thank-offering for their redemption, which was accomplished through Christ. As Paul says of himself, "What I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."³⁰⁾ And this alone is worship pleasing to God and reasonable.³¹⁾ All non-Christians, on the other hand, because they still have an evil conscience, think they must direct their religious endeavors, insofar as they still exist, to reconciling God by their own doing. And this *modus Deum colendi atque Deo serviendi* pleases God so little that it is rather under God's curse. "For those who deal with the works of the law are under the curse," Gal. 3:10.

The striving to secure life with the help of a higher power has also been described as common to all religions. Kirn, for example, thinks he can say: "What we find in all religions is the striving for securing, supplementing and perfected personal and fellowship life with the help of a higher, superhuman power."³²⁾ But this "striving" to secure one's life by one's own doing fits only to the non-Christian religions, because the work religion, the *opinio legis*, is innate to all non-Christians.. But as for the Christian religion, which consists in faith in Christ crucified for the sins of the world, it is not "aspired to" by any man. It has never entered a man's heart,³³⁾ and when it comes to him in the word of preaching, it is judged by him, as long as he is a natural man, to be an offence and folly, not to be striven for, but to be rejected.³⁴⁾ Even newer theologians admit that a general concept of religion, which as *genus* also includes the non-Christian religions, is not found in the Holy Scriptures. Thus Nitzsch-Stephan states:³⁵⁾ "In the Old Testament a general concept of

30) Gal. 2:20. 31) Rom. 12:1.

32) Grundriß 3, p. 10. 33) 1 Cor. 2:9.

34) 1 Cor. 1:23; 2:14. 35) Ev. Dogmatik, 1912, p. 112.

religion, which could also apply to paganism,... is not given." "The New Testament likewise lacks such a fixed general concept."

The "older theologians" are therefore not to be blamed, but to be praised, if they held on to the duality of the essentially different religions by placing the Christian religion in a class of its own and bringing all non-Christian religions under the rubric "*falsae religiones*", from which men are to be redeemed by the Christian religion.³⁶⁾ Likewise in innumerable places Luther. He remarks on Is. 44:17: "Thus the prophet admonishes against other religions, which do nothing but wear out body and soul at the same time in vain, and the stricter they are, the more they make men fearful, distressed and bring them to despair. And just as the woman who suffered from the flow of blood only became worse with her illness because of the treatment of the physicians, Mark. 5:26, so also through such actions the evil becomes worse and the hearts are made more and more restless, as we experienced under the pope, when the souls, after countless satisfactions, prayers, fasts, masses, pilgrimages, were not calmed but tormented more severely. But the Word alone truly comforts, according to the passage: 'If we have been justified through faith, we have peace' Rom. 5:1. Therefore the true and only religion and worship is this, that we believe the forgiveness of sins, which God gives by grace and freely, without works following or preceding, out of pure mercy, as he makes the sun to shine and gives all other good things that we enjoy. If one thus believes this benevolent God, who benefits by grace and freely, this is true religion and true righteousness." Of more recent Lutheran theologians, Moritz von Engelhardt has also emphatically pointed out that there are only two essentially different religions in the world.³⁷⁾

But at this point it was and is objected that the old theologians and also Luther still lacked

36) Quenstedt, I, 28: *Religionis vox sumitur vel improprie et abusive vel proprie. Improprie et abusive accipitur pro religione falsa, v. g. ethnica, Turcica, Iudaica, quo sensu agit Calixtus in Apparatu Theologico de diversis mundi religionibus, cum tamen una tantum sit vera religio, nempe Christiana.* [[Google](#)]

37) RE. 2 XVII, 773.

the necessary psychological, historical and philosophical consideration of the religions for the correct classification of the religions. These branches of knowledge had been devoted the due attention only in more recent time. But here, too, there is a self-deception. Even by means of the psychology of religion, the history of religion and the philosophy of religion we do not get beyond the dual number of the essentially different religions.

As far as the psychological consideration of the religions is concerned, the "similarity" of the "psychological phenomena" in non-Christians and Christians has been pointed out with great energy. Because the older theologians had overlooked this sameness, it was not possible for them to bring the Christian religion under one genus with the non-Christian ones.³⁸⁾ But the claimed similarity of psychological phenomena in Christians and non-Christians disappears immediately as soon as we examine comparatively. The similarity is replaced by the diametrical contrast. In the non-Christian soul we find the following psychological phenomena: the consciousness of guilt or the evil conscience, the fear of punishment and thus the inner flight from God, the striving to avert punishment by one's own works, and, because the striving does not lead to the desired goal, the state of fear of death and hopelessness.³⁹⁾ In the Christian soul we find the opposite states and movements: the good conscience through faith in the reconciliation that has come about through Christ,⁴⁰⁾ not inward flight from God, but joyful access to God,⁴¹⁾ not fear of death and hopelessness, but triumph over death⁴²⁾ and the certain hope of eternal life.⁴³⁾ Thus the "sameness" of psychological states and phenomena is reduced

38) For example, Kirn, Grundriß 3, p. 9.

39) Eph. 2:12; Hebr. 2:15. Harleß rightly refers the exceptions to Eph. 2:12, which Zwingli, Bucer and others assumed with regard to individual heathens, to the realm of "dreams". Luther against Zwingli's salvation of the heathen heroes Hercules, Theseus, Socrates, etc. St. L. XX, 1767. The self-confessions of the heathen about their hopelessness in Luthardt, Apol. Vortr. I, 2, note 11.

40) Rom. 5:1: Ειρήνην εχομεν προς τον θεόν διά τον κυρίον ημών Ιησον Χρίστον. [Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.]

41) Rom. 5:2: Δί οὔ (Χρίστον) και την προσαγωγήν εσχίκαμεν τη πίστει εις την χάριν ταντην. [By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.]

42) 1 Cor. 15:55: ποῦ σου θάνατε τὸ κέντρον; Phil. 1:23: Ἐπιθυμῶ εἶναι εἰς τὸ ἀναλῦσαι καὶ συν Χριστῷ εἶναι.

43) Rom. 5:2: Κανχώμεθα ἐπ ἐλπίδι τῆς δόξης του θεου.

to the fact that both classes, non-Christians and Christians, according to their common human nature, have a human soul and mental movements, that is, to a purely formal sameness. But as far as the trend and the quality of the movements indicated by it are concerned, there is not sameness but complete opposition. It is also not to be forgotten in the study of the psychology of religion that the souls of non-Christians, according to Christ's reliable statement, are dwelling and working places of the strong armed one, who keeps his palace safe, 4⁴⁾ while the souls of Christians are inhabited and driven by the Spirit of God, 4⁵⁾ for which the apostle Paul also refers to the experience of the former heathens and Jews, who went through both psychological stages.⁴⁶⁾ Now, since the Prince of this world and the Holy Spirit do not cause essentially the same, but two different psychological phenomena in the souls, which are just opposite to each other, the psychology applied to religion also does not lead us to a uniform concept of religion, but on the contrary to two essentially different religions.

But also the historical consideration of the religions does not lead us beyond the duality of the same. If we present the "religious phenomena" in the non-Christian religions to ourselves and compare them with those of the Christian religion (Comparative Religion, Comparative Religious Research), then we again stand before the result, that the non-Christian religions want to regulate their relationship to the Godhead, no matter whether they think of the Godhead monotheistically or polytheistically or otherwise, in the way of human action, while the Christian religion has its essence precisely in the *πίσται, ουκ ἐξ ἔργων*.⁴⁷⁾ The really historical consideration of religions leads to the result which Max Müller [*sic* Monier-Williams] summarizes in a blessed hour as the yield of his comparative religious research thus:⁴⁸⁾ "In the discharge of my duties for forty years as professor of Sanskrit

44) Luke 11:21.

45) 1 Cor 3:16; Rom 8:11, 14.

46) Eph. 2:11, 12 (*μνημονεύετε*); 1 Cor. 12:2 (*οἴδατε*); Eph. 2:2, 3: *Περιπατήσατε... κατά τον ἄρχοντα τῆς ἐξουσίας τον ἀέρος, τον πνεύματος τον νν ενεργοννντος εν τοῖς νίοις τῆς ἀπειθείας.*

47) Rom. 3:28; 4:5; Eph. 2:8.

48) The same words are reported II, 2, note 8, in German translation. We give here the English original.

in the University of Oxford, I have devoted as much time as any man living to the study of the Sacred Books of the East, and I have found the one key-note, the one diapason, so to speak, of all these so-called sacred books, whether it be the Veda of the Brahmans, the Puranas of Siva and Vishnu, the Koran of the Mohammedans, the Zend-Avesta of the Parsees, the Tripitaka of the Buddhists, - *the one refrain through all — salvation by works*. They all say that salvation must be purchased, must be bought with a price, and that the sole price, the sole purchase-money, must be our own works and deservings. Our own holy Bible, our sacred Book of the East, *is from beginning to end a protest against this doctrine*. Good works are, indeed, enjoined upon us in that sacred Book of the East far more strongly than in any other sacred book of the East; but they are only the outcome of a grateful heart — they are only a thank-offering, the fruits of our faith. They are never the ransom-money of the true disciples of Christ. Let us not shut our eyes to what is excellent and true and of good report in these sacred books, but let us teach Hindus, Buddhists, Mohammedans, that there is only one sacred Book of the East that can be their mainstay in that awful hour when they pass all alone into the unseen world. It is the sacred Book which contains that faithful saying, worthy to be received of all men, women, and children, and not merely of us Christians — that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

Finally, also the philosophical concept of religion does not lead beyond the dual number of religions. Here we encounter the difficulty that its representatives are by no means unanimous about the meaning and content of a philosophical concept of religion. The philosophers of religion still speak most comprehensibly who understand the philosophical concept of religion "purely," that is, who want to completely dispense with the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God and as the source and norm of the Christian religion in determining "the essence of religion. If the philosophical concept of religion is understood in this "pure" way, the result is a concept of religion which corresponds to the "human idea" of religion. From this point of view it is said very correctly that a philosophy of religion, "strictly speaking," can exist only when human consciousness has progressed beyond the belief in authority and the idea of a miraculous instruction of men by divine revelation and does not revere the religious

tenets of faith as something ready-made, inviolable, given absolutely from above. In short, the precondition for the establishment of a "genuine" or "purely" philosophical concept of religion is the setting aside of the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures. Such a purely human concept of religion exists. But we stand here immediately again before the pagan concept of religion with the content: "salvation by works", as ~~Max Müller~~ [sic Monier-Williams] expresses it. And that is quite all right. We must always remember that the content of the Christian religion, according to which mankind is reconciled to God through Christ's *satisfactio vicaria* and man therefore has a gracious God without works of his own through faith in Christ, is *terra incognita* for every man, philosophers included. The content of the Christian religion has never come into a man's heart, ἐπὶ καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἀνέβη ["entered into the heart of man"].⁴⁹⁾ On the other hand, a knowledge of the law of God is proper to all men, including the philosophers. The work of the law stands also in the hearts of the philosophers.⁵⁰⁾ Therefore, the religious thoughts of the men who belong to the department of "philosophers" also move in the field of the law and the works of men. Socrates, in the hour of his death, wants to have sacrificed a cock to Asclepius, and Kant, whom some have declared to be the first real philosopher of religion, has translated the essence of religion into human morality with the rejection of the Christian doctrine of reconciliation.⁵¹⁾ Luther very clearly recognized and brought out the philosophers' concept of religion. He says, for example:⁵²⁾ "From this natural knowledge (of the law) have their origin all the books of the philosophers, who before others have been somewhat more reasonable than Aesop, Aristotle, Plato, Xenophon, Cicero, Cato. ... But if you ask of conscience how that is to be satisfied, and of the hope of eternal life, they are in truth like the raven which here [Gen. 8:7] flies about the box, and finds not peace without, but within the box seeks it not, as Paul says of the Jews Rom. 9: 'Israel hath been after the law of righteousness, and hath not passed over the law of righteousness.' The reason is: the law is like the raven, is an office of death and sins, and makes hypocrites."⁵³⁾ In short, the "purser" we

49) 1 Cor. 2:9. 50) Rom. 2:15.

51) M. Heinze in RE.³ XVI, 613 f. 52) St. L. I, 621.

53) Even more detailed on Is. 9: 2 St. L. VI, 102 ff.

the philosophical concept of religion corresponding to the "human idea", the more surely it leads past the Christian religion. It does not include the Christian religion in itself, but it is diametrically opposed to it. Thus, even by means of the psychological, historical and philosophical consideration of religions, we do not get beyond the duality of the essentially different religions.

There are, what we should point out here at least in passing, also such representatives of a "philosophical" concept of religion who do not want to dispense with the revelation of the Holy Scriptures, but on the contrary presuppose the revelation of the Scriptures and demand it as an object of contemplation. They admit that the Christian religion is beyond all human ideas of religion. They think, however, that the Christian truths revealed in Scripture and believed at first on the authority of Scripture can be presented subsequently for the human thinking process in such a way that, even apart from the revelation and authority of Scripture, they could be recognized and comprehended as truth by the thinking human mind. Thus meant Anselm, the "father of scholasticism," Credo, ut intelligam. ["I believe in order to understand"]. On the one hand, Anselm is zealous against the "modern dialecticians" who want to put knowledge before faith and therefore reject from the outset that which they cannot understand (*intelligere*). On the other hand, Anselm puts the issue to Christians to progress from faith to knowledge (*proficere*).⁵⁴⁾ Quite similarly, such recent theologians who consider it the real task of the "scientific theology" of our time to elevate faith to knowledge, to satisfy the "intellectual need" of Christians, or — which is the same thing — to prove the Christian religion to be an "absolute" truth, that is, a truth that, even apart from the revelation of Scripture, can be known as truth.⁵⁵⁾ This attempt to raise the status of faith is based on the opinion that, even if not all Christians, at least the "theologian" can already in this life acquire a knowledge of the Christian religion that goes beyond faith in God's revelation.

54) Mansi XX, 742: *Christianus per fidem debet ad intellectum proficere, non per intellectum ad fidem accedere, aut, si intelligere non valet, a fide recedere. Sed cum ad intellectum valet pertingere, delectatur*. [Google]

55) Cf. Luthardt, *Dogmatik* 10, p. 5 ff, under the section "Die Berechtigung der Theologie". Also already Harleß, *Theol. Enzyklopädie*, 1837, p. 27.

in the Word. This opinion is so certainly erroneous, as Christ allows all religious knowledge of truth to be imparted only by faith in his word, and the apostle Paul ascribes pomposity and ignorance (τετρωτοι, μη πιστάμενος) to every man, especially also to the teacher in the church, who does not abide by Christ's words.⁵⁶⁾ The result of the theology that wants to elevate faith to knowledge is, as old Lutheran theologians crudely put it, a monstrosity, namely a *mixtum compositum* of theology and philosophy, similar to "the biform generation of the Centaurs."⁵⁷⁾ According to this theological method, Anselm already eliminated the vicarious character of Christ's fulfillment of the law, the *obedientia activa*, from Christ's atoning work⁵⁸⁾ and Abelard, according to the same method⁵⁹⁾, eliminated Christ's vicarious satisfaction (*satisfactio vicaria*) from Christian doctrine.⁶⁰⁾ Among the more recent theologians the attempt to elevate faith to knowledge has led to the result that with them the denial of *satisfactio vicaria*⁶¹⁾ and the denial of Scripture as the sole source and norm of Christian doctrine has admittedly become quite general. This subject must be taken again under several of the following sections, especially also under the chapter "Theology and Science".

4. The two sources of knowledge of the actually existing religions.

Just as there are, in terms of content, only two essentially different religions, the religion of the Law or of one's own works and the religion of the Gospel or of faith in Christ, so there are also only two different sources of knowledge (*principia cognoscendi*) from which the actually existing religions are drawn. The religion of the law in its various forms outside and inside the external

56) 1 Tim. 6:3ff.

57) Quenstedt, I, 57.

58) Cf. the quotation from Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo*, II, note 1050.


59) Quote from Abälard's exposition of the Letter to the Romans, II, note 1005.

60) R. Seeberg also rightly points out that Anselm and Abelard move on the same rationalistic ground. Both place *ratio* next to *fides*. [Dogmengesch. II, 41 f.](#)



61) Detailed exposition under the section "More detailed description of modern theories of reconciliation" II, 429 ff.

Christianity people have from themselves. It is of human origin, *man-made religion*. The scripture points to this human origin of the multiform religion of the law very emphatically. What the Scripture says about this, we summarize here again in a little further elaboration under the following three points: First, even after the fall, men still have a knowledge of the divine law. They know of God's righteousness, τὸ δικάϊωμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιγνόντες.⁶²⁾ The work required by the divine law, even if they do not have the law revealed in Scripture, stands written in their hearts, νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες ἐαυτοῖς εἰσιν νόμος, οἷτινες ἐνδείκνυνται τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν.⁶³⁾ Secondly, they have an evil conscience because of their transgressions of the divine law. They "know that they who do such things"—namely, the previously mentioned pagan sins—"are guilty of death," τὸ δικάϊωμα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐπιγνόντες ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πρᾶσσοντες ἄξιοι θανάτου εἰσίν.⁶⁴⁾ Hence, thirdly, by moral endeavors, and by services and sacrifices devised by them, they think they ought to and can propitiate God, even if they have to write on the altar, "To the unknown God," ἀγνώστῳ θεῷ.⁶⁵⁾ It should be noted again the words of The Apology: *Haec opinio legis* (that grace may be obtained by works) *haeret naturaliter in animis hominum, neque excuti potest, nisi quum divinitus docemur, gerner: Sic de omnibus operibus iudicat mundus, quod sint propitiatio, qua placatur Deus.*⁶⁶⁾ The apostle Paul explicitly calls the religion of the law the religion of the flesh when he calls out to the Galatians, insofar as they wanted to be justified by the law, "begun in the Spirit (πνεύματι), are ye now made perfect by the flesh (σάρκι)?"⁶⁷⁾ Luther remarks on this in his commentary on Galatians:⁶⁸⁾ "Here Paul contrasts 'spirit'

62) Rom. 1:32. God's δικάϊωμα here is God's legal statute, legal determination. Cf. [Stöckhardt](#) on this passage. [Ed. — [Epistle to the Romans](#), p. 66 f.; [Schade/Stalke p. 73](#) f.] . Also Meyer and Philippi z. St.

63) Rom. 2:15. The Apology, p. 87, 7 [[Trigl. 121, 7](#) ]: *Humana ratio naturaliter intelligit aliquo modo legem, habet enim idem iudicium scriptum in mente.*

64) Rom. 1:32. [Stöckhardt](#) on this passage. [Ed. — [see page 67 5th line down](#); pg . [Schade/Stahlke p. 73](#)]: "To think with Hofmann here of the death penalty to be executed by the authorities is quite out of the way." [Philippi](#) on this passag. points to the pagan Hades doctrine with its rebuke and judges: "It is accordingly θάνατος in our place probably to be interpreted from the *mors aeterna*."

65) Acts 17:23. 66) M. 134, 144 [[Trigl., 197, 144](#) ]; 123, 91. [[Trigl. 179, 91](#) ]

67) Gal. 3:3. 68) [St. L. IX. 288 f.](#) Erl. Gal. I. 313.

and 'flesh' with each other. Here, as I have already reminded you, he does not call 'flesh' lust, animal passions or sensual desires; for here he does not speak of lust or other lusts of the flesh, but of the forgiveness of sins, of the justification of the conscience, of the attainment of righteousness that is valid before God, of deliverance from the law, from sin and from death. ... Therefore (here) flesh is nothing but righteousness, the wisdom of the flesh, and the thoughts of reason, which endeavors to be justified by the law." Thus, on the basis of Scripture, it is certain that any religion that somehow seeks to turn God's grace to man through human performance is not wisdom from God, but wisdom from below, in short, "man-made."

The religion of the gospel, on the other hand, which has as its content that the Son of God became man, reconciled men to God by his work, so that men now without works of their own (χωρίς έργων νόμου), by faith in Christ's work, are saved — this religion did not originate in the human heart, ἐπὶ καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἀνέβη, but was hidden from eternity in God's heart and has become known in time only through God's revelation in the Word. The Christian religion of grace is, in the strict sense of the Word of God, God's wisdom, σοφία θεοῦ. Even the elite of mankind, the supreme ones of this world, have not come up with the idea that without man's own works, for the sake of Christ crucified, God forgives man's sin.⁶⁹⁾ In short, the Christian religion of grace is in no sense a human invention, but "God-made" and has its only source of knowledge (*principium cognoscendi*) in God's Word of revelation, which now the Church possesses until the Last Day in the written Word of the Apostles and Prophets.⁷⁰⁾ It therefore stands that all doctrines, even within external Christianity, by which the attainment of God's grace is made dependent on human works and "moral achievements" to various extents and under various names (Pelagianism, Semipelagianism, Synergism), are of human origin. They do not belong to the realm of divine religion revealed in the Word of God, but to the realm of man-made

69) 1 Cor. 2:6 ff.

70) Rom. 16:25. 26; Eph. 2:20; 1 Jn. 1:4.

religions. If they had always been marketed by their representatives under their correct predicate, "man-made," the Christian church would have been saved from much confusion, strife, and factionalism.

If we still ask since when the religion of the gospel of grace became known in the world, it must be said that it was revealed immediately after the Fall of man in the promise of the woman's seed that was to crush the serpent's head.⁷¹⁾ That all the Old Testament prophets also in *unisono* taught the religion of the gospel, and that all the children of God at the time of the Old Testament believed it *unanimitor*, Peter testifies: "Of this (Jesus) all the prophets testify, that through his name all who believe in him should receive forgiveness of sins."⁷²⁾ Likewise Paul says of the righteousness which *χωρίς νόμου* obtains through faith in Christ: *μαρτυρονημένη υπό τον νόμου και τών προφητών*, Rom. 3. He brings historical proof of this in the 4th chapter of Romans. Luther's expositions about the duality of the religious sources of knowledge run through all his writings.⁷³⁾

5. The cause of the divisions within the external Christianity. ^

Since the non-Christian religions seek reconciliation with God through human works, but their own works cannot bring their consciences to rest, it is not strange but completely natural that the non-Christian religions appear in almost endless forms. The Lutheran Confessions also reminds us of this reason for the multiformity of non-Christian religions. The Apology says: *Quia nulla opera reddunt pacatam conscientiam, ideo subinde nova opera excogitantur praeter mandata Dei.*⁷⁴⁾ On the other hand, one should expect that within Christianity different parties are completely excluded. The Christian church has only one source of knowledge for its doctrines, namely Christ's word.⁷⁵⁾ which he gave to the church through his apostles and prophets.

71) Cf. Luther on Gen. 3:15. [St. L. I, 230 ff; III, 650 ff.](#)

72) Acts 10:43.

73) Luther speaks about this in particular detail in [St. L. VII, 1704 to 1712.](#)

74) M. 122, 87 [[Trigl. 177, 87](#) ].

75) Jn. 8:31-32: "If you abide in my address (τῷ λόγῳ τῷ ἐμῷ), you are my right disciples and will know the truth."

has given?⁷⁶⁾ In this word of Christ, however, the fruitful mother of party formations, namely the religion of works, is most decisively rejected⁷⁷⁾ and, on the other hand, the divine forgiveness of sins without the works of the law, through faith in Christ's once accomplished and perfect work of reconciliation, is most clearly taught.⁷⁸⁾ In addition, experience has shown that through faith in the reconciliation made by Christ, human consciences are at peace and there is no reason to look for other methods of reconciliation.⁷⁹⁾ Thus, one should really expect that various parties and divisions in the Christian church would be completely excluded, as they are also expressly forbidden in Scripture.⁸⁰⁾ But in the history of the Christian church we encounter quite a different picture. Even the apostolic church had to suffer from factions.

Where do these divisions come from? They have their reason neither in the difference of climate, as some have thought, nor in the difference of race, as others have said, ⁸¹⁾ but in the fact that within the church teachers appeared and found followers who did not stick to the word of the apostles and prophets of Christ, but proclaimed their own word and thus consequently also damaged or downright denied the *differentia specifica* of the Christian religion, the justification by faith without works of the Law. That already under the eyes of the Apostles people appeared who did not want to accept the apostolic word as the Word of God, but set their human opinion against it, is clearly evident from Paul's admonition to the Roman congregation: " I beseech you, brethren, mark them which

76) Jn. 17:20: Διά τον λόγον αντών, namely the apostle, shall believe in Christ all who become faithful until the Last Day. Eph. 2:20: ἐποικοδομηθέντες ἐπὶ τῇ θεμελίῳ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν.

77) Gal. 2:16: οὐ δικαιοθήσεται ἐξ ἔργων νόμου πᾶσα σὰρξ. Gal. 3:10 ὅσοι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου εἰσὶν ὑπὸ κατάραν εἰσὶν.

78) Rom. 3:28: Λογίζόμεθα ὅτι οὐκ ἐστιν δικαιοσύνη ἀνθρώπου χωρὶς ἔργων νόμου. Gal. 2:16: εἰδότες ὅτι οὐκ ἐστιν δικαιοσύνη ἀνθρώπου ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ.

79) Rom. 5:1: Δικαιωθέντες ὁν ἐκ πίστεως, εἰρήνην ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Col. 2:10: Ἐατέ ἐν αὐτῷ [in Christo] πεπληρωμένοι.

80) 1 Cor. 1:10: μὴ ἦ ἐν μῖν σχίσματα.

81) Cf. [Nitzsch-Stephan, Ev. Dogmatik, p. 270](#). Hase, [Hutterus Redivivus 10, p. 12](#), note 1.

cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them!" ⁸²⁾ Especially in the Corinthian congregation there were people who considered themselves "prophets" and "spiritual" and nevertheless, or precisely because of this, decisively questioned the divine authority of the Apostle's word. Paul sees himself prompted to the sharp word: "If anyone lets himself think that he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize (επιγινώσκέτω, acknowledge) what I write to you, for they are the Lord's commandments."⁸³⁾ And that thus in the apostolic church mightily stirred up the attempt to substitute works doctrine for the Christian doctrine of grace, is evident both from Paul's astonishment at the apostasy of the Galatians: "I am astonished that you should so soon turn away from him who called you into the grace of Christ to another gospel," as well as from Paul's extremely vehement polemic against the works teachers: "If we also, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you any other gospel than that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed!" and, "Would to God that they also were cut off who disturb you!" ⁸⁴⁾ These efforts to set aside the Apostle's word and with it also the Christian doctrine of grace of Christianity, declare to us the emergence and the existence of factions in the Christian church until this day.

In order to prove this, we must examine the main existing church parties, i.e. the Roman party, the Reformed fellowships, the parties within the Lutheran church, also the modern-theological trend, in their own way. For this purpose it is necessary that we bring here, in the introduction, short excerpts from longer expositions, which run through the whole dogmatics and serve there for the detailed exposition of the individual doctrines in thesis and antithesis. Here we treat what in recent dogmatics and monographs is brought under the titles: "Romanism and Protestantism", "Lutheran and Reformed Protestantism", "Further Development of Lutheranism", "Modern Theology of the Old Faith", "Irenic Theology", etc.

As for the largest, the Roman party, while recognizing *in thesi* the divine authority of Scripture, but interpreted in the sense of the Roman Church, the *sancta mater ecclesia*, that is, in the last instance

82) Rom. 16:17.

83) 1 Cor. 14:37.


84) Gal. 1:6-9; 5:12.

according to the sense of the pope.⁸⁵⁾ In this interpretation of the Scriptures according to the sense of the "holy mother church", resp. of the pope, the Roman party comes to the point that it expressly and very decidedly puts a curse on the central doctrine of the Christian religion, the justification of man by faith in the gospel of grace without works of the law.⁸⁶⁾ The fact that there are still Christians within the Roman party is due to the fact that there are always individual souls who, in defiance of the "church" prohibition, abandon their trust in their own works and place their confidence before God solely in the grace of God in Christ.⁸⁷⁾ But the fact remains: That the Roman Church as such forms a special party in external Christianity is first of all due to the fact that it does not allow Christ's word, the word of the prophets and apostles, the Holy Scriptures, to come into its own, but in fact substitutes the doctrinal determinations of the *sancta mater ecclesia*, that is, of the pope, for the Christian principle of knowledge. Or as Luther adequately puts it in the Smalcald Articles:⁸⁸⁾ "The Pope boasts that all rights exist in the shrine of his heart (*in scrinio sui pectoris*), and what he judges and says with his church is to be spirit and law, even if it is above and against Scripture or the oral word." With the actual setting aside of Scripture, the forbidding of the Christian doctrine of grace is then also given. The whole great machinery of the Roman party is set upon works doctrine and the authority of the Pope. In the event that these two factors were abandoned, the Roman party would disappear from external Christendom.

Reformed church fellowships also admit the divine authority of Scripture *in thesi*, with a strong emphasis on the inspiration of Scripture, notably among the older Reformed, but also among newer Reformed.⁸⁹⁾ It has become widely fashionable

85) Thus the Tridentine. Sess. IV, *Decretum de editione et usu sacrorum librorum*. Smets, p. 15.

86) Tridentinum, Sess. VI, can. 11, 12, 20. The further exposition under the section "The Papal Church and the Doctrine of Justification," II, 667 ff.

87) Apology, 151, 271 [Trigl. 225, 271 Etiam si in ecclesia pontifices aut nonnulli theologi ac monachi docuerunt, remissionem peccatorum, gratiam et iustitiam per nostra opera et novos cultus quaerere, ... mansit tamen apud aliquos pios semper cognitio Christi.

88) M. 321, 4. [Trigl. 495, 4 

to define the difference between the Reformed and Lutheran churches as the Reformed church letting Scripture be "more exclusively" the source of Christian doctrine, while the Lutheran church, being more "historical" and "conservative" in nature, lets tradition come into play as well as Scripture.⁹⁰⁾ This dogma-historical view is factually incorrect. The factual situation is clearly this: The Reformed Church, insofar as it walks in Zwingli's and Calvin's paths, sets aside the Scripture Principle in the doctrines by which it distinguishes itself from the Lutheran Church and has established itself as an independent party in external Christendom, and sets in its place clearly stated and very emphatically held rationalistic axioms.

This happens 1. in relation to the means of grace ordered by God. Although the statements of Holy Scriptures are that the divine presentation of the forgiveness of sins acquired by Christ and the bringing forth and strengthening of faith are accomplished through the external means ordered by God (through the Word of God, and through Baptism and Holy Communion),⁹¹⁾ Zwingli and Calvin, as well as more recent Reformed Christians, maintain that it is not proper for the Holy Spirit to tie His revelation of grace and His efficacy of grace to the external means ordered by God, and in fact the Holy Spirit, where He works for salvation, does not use these external means.⁹²⁾ It was this "Holy Spirit" detached from the means of grace that caused division in the Protestant camp at the time of the Reformation and raised the accusation that Luther had not rightly discerned the gospel but rather in the "flesh" — by which was understood Luther's adherence

90) A compilation of statements about the character of the Lutheran and Reformed churches in Luthardt, Dogmatik.¹¹, p. 26 f.

91) See the sections "The Means of Grace in General" and "All Means of Grace Have the Same Purpose and Effect," III, 122 ff.

92) Thus Zwingli, *Fidei Ratio*. Niemeyer, p. 24: *Dux vel vehiculum Spiritui non est necessarium, ipse enim est virtus et latio, qua cuncta feruntur, non qui ferri opus habeat*. ["A guide or a vehicle is not necessary for the Spirit, for he is the power and strength by which all things are carried, not that which needs iron"]. Likewise Calvin, Inst. IV, 14, 17. The Geneva Catechism (Niemeyer, p. 161) inculcates: *Non esse visibilibus signis inhaerendum, ut salutem inde petamus*. ["We should not cling to visible signs, so that we may seek salvation therefrom"]. Charles Hodge, *Syst. Theol.* ii, 684: "Efficacious grace acts immediately." So also Böhl, Dogmatik, p. 447 f., restricts the validity and effect of the Word to those previously and immediately reborn.

to the means of grace — got stuck.⁹³⁾ The practical consequence of this separation of the revelation of grace and the efficacy of grace from the means of grace is the relapse into the Roman "infused grace" (*gratia infusa*) and thus an apostasy from the Christian doctrine of justification. For all men who allow themselves to be turned away from the external means of grace do not base their confidence in God on the forgiveness of sins or the gracious disposition of God (*favor Dei propter Christ*), which is present through Christ's *satisfactio vicaria*, is presented in the Evangelical promise of the means of grace and is to be believed on the basis of this objective presentation and promise, but on an allegedly directly effected inner transformation, illumination and renewal, that is, on a grace that is conceived as a good quality inherent in man. Since, however, the Holy Spirit professes not to be concerned with such a direct revelation and effect of grace,⁹⁴⁾ all those who really strive for direct enlightenment and renewal according to Zwingli's and Calvin's instructions, of necessity substitute their own human product for the real effect of the Spirit. Luther's frequently expressed judgment that "papists and enthusiasts are one thing" does not originate from the "exaggerated polemics of the sixteenth century," but is a completely objective judgment. That there are nevertheless many children of God in the Reformed fellowships, despite the official denial of the means of grace, comes from an inconsistency that Luther often pointed out, especially in the Smalcald Articles. If the official deniers of the means of grace were to put their theory into practice, they would also have to keep silent about the gospel in outwardly spoken and in outwardly written words, so as not to disturb the supposedly immediate effectiveness of the Holy Spirit. But instead of remaining silent, they are very busy in word and doctrine, and insofar as they then teach the gospel of Christ crucified for the sins of the world, they give opportunity to the Holy Spirit,

93) Zwingli's answer to Luther's writing "That these words" etc., printed in the St. Louis edition of Luther's works, XX, 1131 f.: "I (Zwingli) want to put before your (Luther's) eyes that you have not recognized the broad, glorious glow of the Gospel, because you have forgotten it again."

94) Cf. III, 170 ff., 175 ff.

not without the Word and alongside the Word, but precisely through the Word, that is, indirectly, to work and maintain faith in Christ.⁹⁵⁾

2 Another setting aside of the Scriptural word on the basis of a rationalistic axiom also underlies the Reformed denial of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper. That the scriptural words of the Lord's Supper refer *prima facie* not to the absence but to the presence of the body and blood of Christ is admitted directly and indirectly. Only the words of the Lord's Supper would have to be interpreted in such a way that they agree with "faith." To the question of the content of the "faith" according to which the words of the Lord's Supper are to be interpreted, the old and the new Reformed doctrines do not bring scriptural statements, but a human decree of the content that Christ's human nature, if it is not to be destroyed, can only ever have a visible and local presence (*visibilis et localis praesentia*). Christ according to his human nature, as Calvin very emphatically instructs us, is only ever to have one presence that does not extend beyond the natural size of Christ's body (*dimensio corporis, mensura corporis*), i.e. only over about six feet, and is therefore in any case not sufficient for the simultaneous celebration of the Lord's Supper in many places in the world. Not only Carlstadt and Zwingli, but also Calvin, in particular, base their opposition to the Real Presence, on which the words of the Lord's Supper are based, on the canon that Christ's body, wherever it is, must necessarily always have spatial extension and be visible.⁹⁶⁾ Also in the closed doors mentioned in Jn. 20:19 an opening must be added, and Luke 24:31 must be interpreted in such a way that Christ Himself did not become invisible according to His human nature, but that the eyes of the Emmaus disciples were covered.⁹⁷⁾ In short, the Reformed denial of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper is clearly based on the fact that a human axiom is asserted against the statements of Scripture.

95) on Reformed self-deception III, 188 ff.

96) Inst. IV, 17, 19 Calvin insists on a presence of the body of Christ, *quae nec mensuram illi suam auferat vel pluribus simul locis distrahat — vel in pluribus simul locis ponitur*. [[Google](#)] Inst. IV, 17, 29: *Haec est propria corporis veritas, ut spatio contineatur, ut suis dimensionibus constet, ut suam faciem habeat*. [[Google](#)]

97) Inst. IV, 17, 29, at the end.

Calvin accepts Luther's statement of the *status controversiae*: "All their thing stands upon it, that Christ's body must be alone in one place, bodily and in a tangible manner."⁹⁸⁾

The question whether the grace of God in Christ is universal (*gratia universalis*) or particular (*gratia particularis*), the Calvinist Reformed think they should answer not from the statements of Scripture, which read universal grace,⁹⁹⁾ but from the historical "success" or the historical "experience". "We must assume that the *result* is the interpretation of the purposes of God."¹⁰⁰⁾ The Reformed argument, which eliminates the statements of Scripture concerning general grace, runs as follows: because not all men are saved, it must be concluded that Christ's merit and God's will of grace do not extend to all men. The assumption of a general will of grace with a particular result would be an insult to the divine wisdom, power and majesty.¹⁰¹⁾ The strongest rejection of the Scriptural Principle

98) Detailed exposition of the motive for the reformed doctrine of absence III, 376 ff.

99) Jn. 1:29; 3:16 ff.; 1 Jn. 1:2; 1 Tim. 2:4-6 etc. The detailed exposition II, 21 ff.

100) Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theol.* II, 323. Likewise Calvin, Inst. III, 24, 17. 15: *Quamlibet enim universales sint salutis promissiones, nihil tamen a reprobatorum praedestinatione discrepant, modo in carum effectum mentem dirigamus.- Experientia docet, ita [Deum] velle respiscere quos ad se invitat, ut non tangat omnium corda.*

101) Calvin invokes Inst. III, 24, 16 to refute the general will of grace on God's omnipotence: *Si tenacius urgeant, quod dicitur [Deum] velle misereri omnium, ego contra excipiam, quod alibi scribitur, Deum nostrum esse in coelo, ubi faciat quaecunque velit*, Ps. 115:3. Hodge, op. cit.: "It cannot be supposed that God intends what is never accomplished-that He adopts means for an end which is never to be attained. This cannot be affirmed of any rational being who has the wisdom and power to secure the execution of his purposes. Much less can it be said of Him whose power and wisdom are infinite." Incidentally, Calvin took the liberty of a change in wording when quoting Ps. 115:3. The words, "But our God is in heaven; all that he pleases (יְהוָה) [HEBREW]) he makes," are but a description of the omnipotence of God in contrast to the impotence of the idols of the heathen, as is immediately pointed out, v. 4: "Those idols find silver and gold, made by the hands of men." By inserting a *ubi*: Our God is in heaven, "ubi faciat quaecunque velit," Calvin perverts the idea that God wills and acts differently in heaven than on earth.

and the most decisive adoption of a speculative rationalism on Calvin's part comes to our attention where Calvin, in order to protect his *gratia particularis*, virtually mocks Christ's lamentation and tears before Jerusalem (Matt. 23:37; Luke 19:41 ff.) and God's arms spread out for the salvation of the people (Is. 65:2; Rom. 10:21) as a reliable revelation of God's general will of grace by the remark that this would erroneously transfer human things to God.¹⁰²⁾ Whoever carefully reads the relevant passages in Calvin's *Institutiones* cannot help feeling that Calvin, in the interest of his rationalistic speculation about the absolute God, becomes a fanatical fighter and persecutor of all scriptural statements that refer to the general grace of God in Christ. The necessary consequence of the path interpretation of *gratia universalis* is that it makes the gospel of Christ practically useless. In the sinner struck by the law of God, faith in the Savior of sinners cannot arise as long as the idea of a *gratia particularis* dominates the consciousness. That there are also among the Calvinistic Reformed children of God who rejoice in their redemption through Christ, is due to the fact that some among them have never accepted the *gratia particularis*, others, who have accepted it, take refuge in the *universalis gratia* under the *terrores conscientiae*, to which inconsequentially Reformed teachers themselves counsel and thus condemn their partisanship with regard to the *gratia particularis* itself.¹⁰³⁾

Besides the Calvinist Reformed, there are also Arminian Reformed. These, in contrast to the Calvinist Reformed, want to hold on to the *gratia universalis*, but think that they can only do this by leaving the *sola gratia* behind. They teach a human participation for the origin of faith.¹⁰⁴⁾ But this "limitation" of *sola gratia* is an apostasy from the Scripture Principle, because Scripture ascribes man's conversion and salvation

102) *Quod humanum est ad Deum transferri*. Inst. III, 24, 17.

103) Cf. Schneckenburger's exposition that pastoral practice drives the Calvinist Reformed to the Lutheran standpoint of universal grace, in *Vergleichende Darstellung d. luth. u. ref. Lehrbegriffs*, I, 260 ff.

104) The *Apol. Conf. Remonstr.*, Ps. 162, asserts that the effect of God's grace for conversion *non posse exire in actum sine cooperatione liberae voluntatis humanae ac proinde, ut effectum habeat, pendere a libera voluntate*.

to the sole efficacy of God.¹⁰⁵⁾ At the same time, through this Arminian faith, which is a partial work of man, the Christian doctrine of justification *χωρίς νόμον, οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων*, is struck right to the heart. As Luther remarks against Erasmus, who also demanded the admission of the *facultas se applicandi ad gratiam* to bring about conversion, "You are at my throat!"¹⁰⁶⁾


The same is true, of course, of the synergistic Lutherans, who also teach that Arminian cooperation in obtaining the grace of God under various expressions (right conduct, self-assertion, self-decision, lesser guilt in comparison with others, etc.) and thereby prevent the emergence of the Christian faith, because the Christian faith at all times has the nature in itself that it arises only in broken hearts¹⁰⁷⁾ and builds on the sola gratia.¹⁰⁸⁾ That there are nevertheless children of God among those who teach synergism in words and writings comes from the fact that they become inconsistent, namely, they do not believe their own doctrine before God and in their prayer closet. Frank rightly thinks that Melancthon never believed his synergistic theory.¹⁰⁹⁾ But what division and separation synergism has caused in the Christian church from Melancthon to our time is well enough known.

In more recent times, a particularly fruitful source of disunity and division within external Christianity has arisen from the fact that most of the public teachers who were considered to be setting the tone have abandoned the Christian concept of the Holy Scriptures.

105) Eph. 1:19; Phil. 1:29; 1 Cor. 2:14; 1:23. The detailed exposition II, 546 ff. 564 ff; III, 107 ff.

106) St. L. XVIII, 1967, opp. v. a. VII, 367.

107) Luther, *Opp.* v. a. VII, 154: *Quamdiu homo persuasus fuerit, sese vel tantulum posse pro salute sua, manet in fiducia sui, nec de se penitus desperat, ideo non humiliatur coram Deo, sed locum, tempus, opus aliquod sibi praesumit vel sperat vel optat saltem, quo tandem perveniat ad salutem.* [Google]

108) Apology, 97, 56 [Trigl. 136, 55 

109) Theology of the Formula of Concord I, 135. On the renunciation on the part of theoretical synergists to come before God with their synergism, cf. also Luther, *De Servo Arbitrio*, *Opp.* v. a. VII, 166; St. L. XVIII, 1729 f. Likewise Mead, *Irenic Theology*, p. 163.

Indeed, they deny that the Holy Scriptures are God's own and infallible Word. They thus abandon the Holy Scriptures as the source and norm of Christian doctrine and, *eo ipso*, the principle of unity in the Christian Church. For only those who abide in Christ's Word know the truth, as Christ himself says."¹¹⁰⁾ And Christ's apostle, Paul, assures us that anyone who does not abide in the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ is darkened and knows nothing.¹¹¹⁾ Modern theology, also the so-called positive one, substitutes as theological principle of knowledge the "experience" of the "theologizing subject", also called "faith consciousness", "Christian consciousness", "born-again I", etc., for the Holy Scriptures. Regarding this "theological method", however, there is a great agreement in modern theology. We even read, "No one bases his dogmatics in the old Protestant manner on the *norma normans*, the Bible."¹¹²⁾ But this general agreement in theological method is — we quoted the words earlier — "bound up with an almost endless abundance of diversities in the application of these principles, as they are determined sometimes more by the religious individuality of the dogmatist, soon more caused by the degree of his scientific consistency."¹¹³⁾ And as by modern theologians in great agreement the Holy Scriptures are abandoned as the sole source and norm of Christian doctrine, so also by them in great agreement the Scriptural doctrine of Christ's *satisfactio vicaria*, and with it the Scriptural doctrine of justification by faith "without works of the law" (ὄνκ ἐξ ἔργων), are rejected.¹¹⁴⁾ To the question whether Christian faith is still possible with the denial of Scripture as the Word of God and with the denial of the *satisfactio Christi vicaria*, the answer is: consequently not. Whoever does not believe Christ and His apostles Jn. 10:35; 2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Petr. 1:10-12 should consequently also believe them Jn. 3:16; Matt. 20:28; Jn. 1:29; 1 Jn. 1:9; Rom. 3:28 etc. But it can happen, and has happened, that someone who theoretically denied the inspiration of the Scriptures and the vicarious satisfaction of Christ, believes, in the face of temptation and

110) Jn. 8:31-32.

111) I Tim. 6:3ff.

112) [Nitzsch-Stephan, Ev. Dogmatik, p. 15.](#)

113) A. a. O., Preface, IX.

114) Thieme in RE.³ XXI, 120.

the distress of death, the forgiveness of his sins on the basis of the word of the Scriptures and on the basis of the vicarious satisfaction of Christ. But then he gives up his hitherto taken partisan position and returns to the unity of faith with the Christian church, which abides by Christ's words and knows no other basis of confidence in the grace of God than the redemption (απολύτρωσις, redemption), which has come about through Christ Jesus.





Thus, by presenting the main ecclesiastical parties, we would have convinced ourselves that factions within the Christian church have their basis in nothing other than the fact that Scripture is abandoned as the sole source and norm of Christian doctrine, and then, consequently, in one form or another, works doctrine also takes the place of the Christian doctrine of grace.

The discussion of parties within external Christianity is followed by the much-discussed question of whether the Lutheran Church should also be included among the parties. In order to answer this question properly, it is necessary to understand what we mean by "Lutheran church" and by "sect" [or party]. We do not understand by "Lutheran church" all fellowships that still call themselves Lutheran, but only those that actually teach and confess the Lutheran doctrine as taught and known in the Confessions of the Lutheran Church. By parties we mean such church fellowships that have constituted themselves independently on the basis of doctrines contrary to Scripture. In this understanding of "Lutheran Church" and "party," it should be said that the Lutheran Church does not form a party because it does not hold any special doctrines in its confession, but only confesses and teaches the doctrine which, according to God's will and order, all Christians should confess and teach. This is the ecumenical character of the Church of the Reformation. On the one hand, the Lutheran Church does not identify itself with the *una sancta*, but rather confesses that children of God can also be found in such fellowships where, in addition to doctrines of men, so much of the gospel is still spoken that faith in Christ as the only Redeemer of sins can thereby arise. On the other hand, the Lutheran Church claims to be the Church of pure doctrine, that is, that its doctrine agrees in all matters with the Holy Scriptures and is to be believed and accepted by all men according to God's will. The proof of this ecumenical character

of Lutheran doctrine is naturally to be led by way of induction. As Luther says in his confession of faith of 1529:¹¹⁵⁾ "Whether someone after my death would say: Where Luther now lived, he would teach and hold this or this article differently, because he has not considered it sufficiently, etc.: against this I say now as then and then as now, that by God's grace I have considered all these articles most diligently, have often drawn them through the Scriptures and back again, and wanted to defend the same as surely as I have now defended the sacrament of the altar." — Here it should only be pointed out that the Lutheran Church passes the examination with regard to the Scripture Principle of its doctrine also at the point at which the great majority of theologians since Augustine until recent times have abandoned the Scripture Principle for rationalistic considerations. We mean the point which has been called the *crux theologorum* and which we would like to call the most severe test of adherence to the Scripture Principle. For one thinks with regard to the grace of God that the *universalis gratia* and the *sola gratia* cannot both be held fast. The Calvinists maintain, as we have seen, that in order to save the *sola gratia* the *universalis gratia* must be abandoned; the synergists demand that in order to save the *universalis gratia* the *sola gratia* must be sacrificed. To hold both at the same time is impossible. The Lutheran Church is clearly aware of the difficulty here for human comprehension. Nevertheless, she holds both *universalis gratia* and *sola gratia* without reservation because both doctrines are clearly attested in Scripture. It expects the solution of the difficulty here for human comprehension to be found in eternal life.¹¹⁶⁾

To the discussion of the divisions within the outer Christianity belongs also a reference to the motives for the deviation from the Scripture doctrine and the usually following party formation. The Holy Scriptures do not know any noble, but only carnal motives for this abnormal phenomenon within the Christian church.

115) [St. L. XX, 1094 ff. Erl. 30, 363 ff.](#)

116) F. C. 709, 28. 29 [[Trigl., 1071, 28-29](#) ]; 557, 17-19 [[837, 17-19](#) ] (confession of *gratia universalis*).- F. C. 525, 9-11 [[788, 9-11](#) ]; 716, 57-64 [[1081, 57-64](#) ] (confession of *sola gratia* and renunciation of the solution of the difficulty present here for human comprehension in this life). Likewise Luther, *De Servo Arbitrio*, Opp. v. a. VII, 365, [St. L. XVIII, 1965 f.](#)

The judgment of Scripture stands in sharp contrast to the judgment of recent theologians of all shades, who not only assume a number of noble motives for the deviation from the teaching of Scripture, such as scientific sense, sense of truth, etc., but also declare "various trends in the church to be intended by God and useful to the church." But the Scriptural statements expressing the contrary judgment are numerous and very definite. As Scripture often and earnestly warns against deviation from the apostles' doctrine, which is Christ's own doctrine,¹¹⁷⁾ so it also abundantly points out the motives for doing so. In general terms, it cites self-interest as the motive: "Such do not serve the Lord Jesus Christ, but their bellies, and by sweet words and splendid addresses they seduce innocent hearts."¹¹⁸⁾ Specializing she calls: Pomposity in their own wisdom,¹¹⁹⁾ Honor before men,¹²⁰⁾ Shyness of the cross,¹²¹⁾ Envy.¹²²⁾ The mildest name of the motive is "ignorance".¹²³⁾ The quality of the motives confirms also church history. Novatian would probably not have become the father of Novatianism and the Novatian schism if he, and not Cornelius, had been chosen as bishop of Rome.¹²⁴⁾ Also Zwingli would hardly have appeared as a reformer beside and against Luther, if he had not meant that Luther was only "one honest Ajax or Diomedes among many Nestors, Ulysses, Menelaen".¹²⁵⁾ It is not beyond the scope of dogmatics to point out emphatically that the evil nature which underlies the apostasy from the Word of Scripture and the formation of parties was not peculiar only to Novatian, Zwingli, and the party founders of the apostolic times, but is found in all of us and is also continually active among us. We experience it in the individual congregations, in the synod and in the bindings of synods, how ambition, envy, personal inclinations and aversions stir up and threaten to degenerate into party formation and separation. *Multae in ecclesia haereses ortae sunt tantum odio doctorem.*¹²⁶⁾ It therefore stands

117) Rom. 16:17. 118) Rom. 16:18. 119) 1 Tim. 6:3.

120) Jn. 5:44. 121) Gal. 6:12. 122) Matt. 27:18.

123) 1 Tim. 6:3; Jn. 16:3; 1 Tim. 1:13.

124) Seeberg, *Dogmengeschichte I*, 138. So also F. H. Foster in *Concise Dictionary*, by Jackson, Chambers and Foster: "The theoretical difference grew out of a personal one." [1899, p. 658]

125) St. L. XX, 1134. 126) Apol. 128:121. [Trigl. 187, 121 

like this: where unity in Christian doctrine exists and is maintained, it is in no way the result of our strength, wisdom and skill, but a work of divine grace and power alone. This is what the Scriptures teach,¹²⁷⁾ and this is also expressed in our church prayers.¹²⁸⁾

6. Christianity as an absolute religion. [^]

The Christian religion is, however, the "absolute", that is, absolutely perfect, religion, which neither needs nor is capable of a supplement or improvement and therefore cannot be surpassed. But this predicate of absoluteness does not come to the Christian religion, insofar as it forms a "logically perfect whole". The logically perfect whole in the sense of human cognition is rejected by the apostle Paul when he expressly calls the religious cognition proper to Christians, the high apostle included, in this life a fragmentary one, ἀρτι γινώσκω ἐκ μέρους.¹²⁹⁾ Furthermore, the Christian religion should not be called absolute insofar as it teaches the "most perfect morality." To be sure, the Christian religion teaches the most perfect morality. Christian morality cannot possibly be surpassed because it has the content, "Thou shalt love God thy Lord with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," and, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."¹³⁰⁾ But this perfect morality is only a consequence and effect of the Christian religion. Both love of God and love of neighbor is a daughter of faith, "that God hath loved us, and hath sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."¹³¹⁾ Paul grounds his exhortation to a Christian moral life thus: "I exhort you by the mercy of God [which appeared in Christ], that ye present your bodies a sacrifice, living, holy, acceptable unto God."¹³²⁾

127) Jn. 17:11, 12, 15, 20, 21; Ps. 86:11 etc.

128) E.g., in the Church Agenda of the Missouri Synod, pp. 44 f. 58 f. S. Walther, Pastoral Theology, note 1, pp. [389](#) f. [*Pastoral Theology*, p. 461-462.]

129) 1 Cor. 13:12. For more on this, see the section "Theology and System".

130) Matt. 22:37-40. 131) 1 John 4:9-21.

132) Rom. 12:1. This is also recalled by [Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 147](#): "The first defect of the (ethical) Kantian version is also inherent in all those interpretations which believe that the perfection of the Christian religion is already sufficiently indicated by the

The Christian religion is "absolute" or absolutely and unsurpassable for a twofold reason.

First of all, because it does not require man's own works or virtue for reconciliation with God, as do all non-Christian religions; on the contrary, it is faith in the perfect and unsurpassable reconciliation that came about because God was in Christ and reconciled the world to Himself.¹³³⁾ To put it still differently, the Christian religion is therefore perfect absolutely, because it is not a moral instruction as to how men can acquire forgiveness of sins for themselves, but on the contrary faith in the forgiveness of sins acquired through Christ's vicarious fulfillment of the law and vicarious suffering of punishment, and which is now offered to faith for appropriation in the promise of the gospel.¹³⁵⁾ In this fact, that through Christ's *satisfactio vicaria* the reconciliation or forgiveness of sins is present and proclaimed in the gospel, it is justified that a man at the same moment, in which he comes to believe the gospel through the effect of the gospel¹³⁶⁾, through this faith — without the work of the law, *χωρίς έργων νόμου* — becomes justified before God¹³⁷⁾ or, what is the same thing, becomes perfect (*πεπληρωμένος, τέλειος*) before God.¹³⁸⁾ For God thus holds it

determination that it is the religion of love (directed towards God and man). It is true that in no other religion the unlimited duty of love is placed in the center as in Christianity. But mere duties do not constitute a religion; and the love which the Christian shows has, according to the Christian faith, not only as its correlative, but also as its presupposition and as its reason for possibility, the love previously experienced on the part of God in the redemption and forgiveness of sins." Ihmels, "Zentralfragen", p. 51, also says correctly, "that for an evaluation of a moral overall appearance, the individual external features cannot be the decisive factor, but only the motives from which the moral action originates".

133) 2 Cor. 5:18. 19. 134) Gal. 4:4. 5; 3:13.

135) Acts 26:18; Luke 24:46. 47. 136) Rom. 10:17; 1 Cor. 2:4. 5.

137) Rom. 3:28: *Λογίζόμεθα οὖν πίστει δικαιοσθαι ἄνθρωπον χωρὶς έργων νόμου*. Rom. 5:1: *Δικαιωθέντες οὖν ἐκ πίστεως κτλ.*

138) Col. 2:10: "You are perfect in Him", namely in Christ, *ἐστε ἐν αὐτῷ πεπληρωμένοι*... This statement does not refer to "specially promoted" Christians, but to all who have accepted Christ by faith, vv. 5-7; that is, to all Christians. And Christians should not let this perfection be disputed by the pretensions of philosophy, v. 8. For philosophy, which asserts itself in the area of religion, can nevertheless

that to him who is ungodly in himself (ασεβής) his faith is counted for righteousness,¹³⁹⁾ or what again is the same, that Christ's perfect righteousness covers the sinner's own unrighteousness.¹⁴⁰⁾ To preserve the absolute character of the Christian religion, therefore, we must fully adhere to the *satisfactio Christi vicaria*. If we wanted to demand with Rome for the attainment of reconciliation with God also "the infused grace", the keeping of

be estimated only as an empty fraud, κενή απάτη, because it is human doctrine (κβτά τήν παράδοσιν τών ανθρώπων), meager knowledge of the world (κατά τα στοιχεία τοῦ κόσμου), namely law (so correctly by recent also Cremer in the dictionary sub στοιχείον). Christians, on the other hand, have their "doctrinal normative" (Meyer) in Christo (κατά Χριστόν), and that they are thereby perfect, the apostle justifies by a reference to the high person of Christ and to the possession which has become theirs through Christ. According to His person, Christ is not a mere man, but He in whom the whole fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily, who is also exalted above the angelic world, so that Christians have no higher perfection to expect from this side (from the angelic world), as the false teachers asserted, v. 16. As to the possession of Christians, which has become theirs in Christ, they have passed from the death of sin to spiritual life through "the circumcision of Christ," baptism, because Christ forgave them all their sins, which forgiveness of sins has its ground in Christ's *satisfactio vicaria*, namely, in the fact that Christ blotted out the debt (χειρόγραφον) incurred by the law by his death on the cross. Meyer: "The objective act of atonement by the death of Christ had preceded and is described v. 14." Also in 1 Cor. 2:6: "But wisdom we speak among the perfect," σοφίαν δε λαλόμεν ἐν τοῖς τελείοις, the "perfect," τέλειοι, are not the Christians "matured," "penetrated into the higher sphere of thorough and comprehensive insight," especially into "the future relations of the Messiah's kingdom" (Meyer etc.), but, according to the preceding and following context, all who, through the action of the Holy Spirit, believe the gospel of Christ crucified, which has been hidden from the world, including its rulers, that is, all Christians (Luther, Olshausen, etc.). Cf. the enumeration and review of the various expositions in Wolf, *Curae*, z. St., with the result: *Mihi quidem cum beato Luthero nostro et plerisque aliis interpretibus prior placet sententia, ut scilicet per τελίους intelligentur credentes, quos cap. 1:24 appellaverat κλητούς*, i. e., *tales, qui factae vocationi obtemperassent*. The whole context does not address "future relationships of the Messiah's kingdom" (a conception in which chiliastic ideas play into it), nor specifically the future salvation of Christians, as v. 9 is occasionally applied, but what Christians have at present through faith in the gospel of Christ crucified.

139) Rom. 4:5.

140) 1 John 2:1, 2: Whether anyone sins, παράκλητον ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν δικαίον.

the commandments of God and of the church ¹⁴¹⁾ or with the newer Protestants, who let "the transformation of human life into its divine form" (i.e. sanctification and good works) be "co-establishing" for the value of the redemptive work of Christ before God, ¹⁴²⁾ we would deprive the Christian religion of its specific character, that is, we would lower it to the level of the religions of the law and thus substitute the *monstrum incertitudinis* for the certainty of grace and sonship to God. If, on the other hand, we hold on to Christ's *satisfactio vicaria* and thus also to Rom. 3:28 and 5:1 ff, then Christianity is for us *eo ipso* the absolute religion, beyond which there can be no development and no higher. We theological teachers of our time have the duty to warn students with great seriousness against all the newer "theories of atonement" which partly expressly reject Christ's *satisfactio vicaria* as too "juridical" and "external," and partly nevertheless call it in need of improvement."¹⁴³⁾

The Christian religion, on the other hand, is perfect and unsurpassable because it has as its only source and norm not the word of man but God's own Word, which is above all human criticism. For the Church of our time, this is the written Word of God, the Holy Scriptures (*sola Scriptura*). With regard to the Holy Scriptures, however, following the normative example of Christ and his apostles¹⁴⁴⁾, we must hold that, although written by men, it is nevertheless not a mixture of the Word of man and the Word of God, but God's own and therefore unbreakable Word, as will be explained in more detail under the section on the inspiration of Scripture. If we were to consider the Holy Scriptures not as God's own unbreakable Word, but as a mixture of the Word of God and the Word of man, they would necessarily become the object of human criticism, and the absolute nature of the Christian religion would be finished. Human criticism outbids itself in the course of time, so that after twenty-five years, or even sooner, it rejects what it still wants to hold on to today as belonging to the essence of the Christian religion.

141) Tridentinum, Sess. VI, can. 11, 12, 20.

142) Thus, e.g., Kirn, Grundriß 3, p. 118. Hereby, the "surety theory" is substituted for the *satisfactio Christi vicaria*.

143) Cf. II, 429 ff. the section "More detailed description of modern theories of reconciliation".

144) Jn 10:35; 2 Tim 3:16, 17; 1 Pet 1:10-12; Eph 2:20.

Adolf Harnack, who wants to distinguish between the essential and the non-essential in the Christian religion on the way of the allegedly "historical" criticism, says quite rightly from his point of view: "I think that after a few hundred years one will discover a lot of contradictory things even in the thought-forms we have left behind and will be strange that we have calmed down. One will still find many hard and brittle shells in what we considered to be the core of things; one will not understand that we could be so short-sighted and not be able to grasp and separate out the essentials in a pure way."¹⁴⁵⁾ Not all recent theologians stand negatively toward the divine authority of Holy Scriptures to the same degree as Harnack. But even those theologians who are classified as positive, but who have also abandoned the inspiration and thus the infallible divine authority of Scripture, are mistaken, even if they think that in their critical position toward Scripture they can hold Christianity as an absolute religion. By wanting to draw the Christian religion from the "Christian ego" or the "Christian consciousness of faith" or the "religious experience," etc., instead of from its divine source, the Scriptures, they relegate the Christian religion to the realm of subjective human opinion, and in place of the "absolute" Christian religion there is admittedly substituted, as we have already heard, "an almost endless abundance of diversities" of religious conception. Therefore, the theological teachers of our time have the duty to warn students with great seriousness against all modern theologians who do not accept the Holy Scriptures as the infallible Word of God. In short, whoever wishes to hold Christianity as the absolute religion must hold both Christ's vicarious satisfaction and the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God.

It may be pointed out here also to the fact that according to the doctrines of the Scriptures the Christian religion has appeared as "absolute" from the very beginning. The objection that the Christian religion belongs to the series of historical phenomena, and, like all history, cannot have absolute but only relative qualities, is not valid. The objection includes a *petitio principii* in itself. It takes for granted

145) [*Essence of Christianity 3, p. 35*](#)

that the omnipotent God who governs history could not or would not intervene in the "history of mankind" in such a way that He revealed Christ as the Savior from sin and death immediately after the Fall of mankind. But such an intervention of God in the history of mankind is indeed present, as Scripture reports very clearly and emphatically. If immediately after the Fall the divine promise is that the seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent, thus putting away the works of the devil, the guilt of sin and death, among men, it is already stated that no other and nothing else will save the human race from the guilt of sin and death than the trust in the work of the seed of the woman. This absoluteness of the Christian religion is taught throughout the Old Testament Scriptures, as Peter Acts 10:43 assures us that all prophets testify of Christ, that through his name all who believe in him shall receive forgiveness of sins. Likewise, Christ Himself says that all the Scriptures of the Old Testament testify to Him (Christ) as the giver of eternal life, and that Abraham in particular already believed in Him.¹⁴⁶⁾ What the Scriptures say about covenant change and the coming of age (*παλαιούσθαι*) of a covenant,¹⁴⁷⁾ does not refer to the gospel of Christ, but to the intervening law covenant of Sinai.¹⁴⁸⁾ In short, according to the Scriptures it is certain that the Christian religion entered the history of mankind from the very beginning, not as coordinated with other religions, nor as excluding other religions within itself and supplementing them, but as the absolute religion in the sharply pronounced sense that it represents the Seed of the woman in his work of redemption as the only deliverer from the guilt of sin and death for all mankind, and thus declares all other religions, whatever their name and form, to be aberrations and not entitled to exist. Therefore, we should not speak of the Christian religion as the "highest", "most perfect" religion, as the "climax" of religions, etc., because by such expressions the idea is awakened as if there were only a gradual difference between Christianity and the non-Christian religions, whereas the difference is a specific one according to the origin (God-made, man-made)

 146) Jn. 5:46, 39; 8:56. 147) Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:6-13.

148) Gal. 3:17 ff.

according to the essence (gospel, law) and therefore according to the result for man (hopelessness, certainty of blessedness). Christianity does not relate to all non-Christian religions like light to semi-darkness, but like light to darkness,¹⁴⁹⁾ not like worship to at least a small beginning of worship, but like worship to demon worship,¹⁵⁰⁾ not like life and a beginning of life, but like life and death.¹⁵¹⁾ Christianity does not merely offer the "highest satisfaction", but the only satisfaction.¹⁵²⁾

Against the absolute character of Christianity, the difference between the Old and New Testaments has been pointed out. This difference is a fact, but only with regard to the clarity and fullness of the revelation, not with regard to the content of the divine revelation, that only faith in Christ without the works of the law is the only way of life for mankind. Christ calls out to the Jews, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."¹⁵³⁾ But at the same time he rejects the idea that he is teaching a novelty. He declares himself to be the very content of the Old Testament Scriptures.¹⁵⁴⁾ In the same way Paul rejects the erroneous opinion that he teaches a new way of righteousness before God with his doctrine of justification by grace through faith in Christ to the exclusion of the law; for the way *χωρίς νόμου* is attested by the law and the prophets¹⁵⁵⁾ and is the only correct historical view of the religion taught in the Old Testament.¹⁵⁶⁾

7. Christian religion and Christian theology. ^

In church usage, a distinction is made between Christian religion and Christian theology in such a way that religion (taken subjectively) denotes the doctrines of all Christians and theology (taken subjectively) denotes the special doctrines of the teachers of the church. This distinction can be accepted. Scripture teaches both,

149) Eph. 5:8: 'Ἦτε γάρ ποτε σκότος, νυν δε φως ἐν κυρίῳ.... The same contrast Is. 9:2 ff; 60:2.

150) 1 Cor. 10:20; Acts 26:18. 151) Eph. 2:1-5.

152) Rom. 5:1 ff; Gal. 2:16. 153) Jn. 8:24.

154) John 5:39. 155) Romans 3:21 ff.

156) Ch. 4 of the Letter to the Romans,

that all Christians have the doctrine of God,¹⁵⁷⁾ as well as that the teachers of Christians should have a special doctrine of God.¹⁵⁸⁾ In making this distinction, however, it should be noted that both types of divine doctrine, that is, not only that of all Christians but also that of the teachers, have only Holy Scriptures as their source of knowledge. Newer theologians negotiate, without having reached an agreement, about the relationship between "religious" and "theological knowledge". Some want them to be "as close together as possible", others want them to be as separate as possible. In the present time there is a lot of discussion about the difference between "religious" and "theological cognition".¹⁵⁹⁾ From the Christian point of view it is to be stated: "Religious cognition" and "theological cognition" do not differ in principle, seen from the source of cognition and the medium of cognition, but coincide in principle, because also the beginning, middle and end of theological cognition is nothing else than believing God's Word, as it is revealed in the Scriptures. The reason is that also the theologians or the teachers of the church in their cognition of the Christian doctrine do not get beyond God's revelation in his Word by one line, as the Scriptures testify so often and manifoldly.¹⁶⁰⁾

157) Jn. 6:45: πάντες (all Christians are addressed) διδακτοί τον θεού.

158) The rhetorical question I Cor. 12:29: Μή πάντες διδάσκαλοι; has the meaning: not all Christians are teachers. Also 1 Tim. 3:2: "But let there be a bishop ... teachable" (διδασκτικός), teachable denotes a special degree of teachability, as also v. 5 is still expressly emphasized, because the bishop is not merely to care for himself and his own house, but also for the congregation of God. Therefore Paul also gives Timothy, 2 Tim. 2:1, the charge, "What you have heard from me, command faithful men who are able to teach others also," οἵτινες ικανοὶ ἐσονται καὶ ἐτέρους διδάξαι. From the lists of qualities to be found in the teachers to be appointed (1 Tim. 3:1 ff.; Tit. 1:5-11), it appears that the teachers are not to be chosen by lot, but according to special qualities, among which is also the special fitness for teaching.

159) Cf. Richard Grützmacher, Studien zur dogm. Theol., 3. Heft, p. 120 ff.

160) According to Jn. 8:31-32 the knowledge of truth (γνώσεσθε τὴν ἀλήθειαν) is only imparted by abiding in Christ's word, which we have in the word of the apostles (Jn. 17:20), and the abiding in Christ's word always only takes place in the way that Christ's word is believed. Insofar as a teacher does not abide in Christ's doctrines, he does not have knowledge but ignorance (1 Tim. 6:3, 4).

The textbooks in which the doctrines of all Christians are compiled according to the main points (religion taken objectively) are usually called catechisms, religious doctrines, manuals of Christian doctrines, etc.¹⁶¹⁾ The doctrines, in which the particular doctrines of the teachers of the Church are presented, are called in church usage: Textbooks of theology (theology taken objectively), dogmatics, systematic theology, scientific theology, the Christian doctrine in scientific presentation; in older times: *loci communes*, *systema theologiae Christianae*, etc. In English, and also in our country, probably the most commonly used expressions are: Doctrinal Theology, Systematic Theology, Dogmatic Theology or briefly Christian Dogmatics. In which sense — and in which sense not — the expressions "science" and "system" are applicable to theology will be explained in more detail under the sections "Theology and Science" and "Theology and System" for reasons of importance.

8. Christian theology. ^

The etymology and thus the word meaning of "theology" is not doubtful, as in the case of the word "religion". Θεολογία is apparently λόγος περί τον θεόν and, taken subjectively, denotes knowledge of God or doctrines of God; taken objectively, doctrines of God.¹⁶²⁾ Similar word formations are psychology, physiology, biology, astrology, etc. Thomas Aquinas famously says of theology: *theologia a Deo docetur, Deum docet et ad Deum ducit*.¹⁶³⁾ This is factually correct. But Baier rightly reminds: *Nomen θεοῦ in compositione cum nomine λόγος obiectum denotat*.¹⁶⁴⁾

161) Cf. Zezschwitz, RE. 2 VII, 585 ff. Luther describes the content of the Catechism in the "Short Preface" to the Large Catechism as "an instruction for children and the simple", as "a children's doctrine, so that every Christian should know for necessity, so that whoever does not know this could not be counted among Christians and not be admitted to any sacrament", about catechisms in general and Luther's Catechism in particular with indication also of the more recent literature cf. F. Bente in [Concordia Triglotta, Histor. Introduction, pp. 62-93](#) [see [BookOfConcord here](#) to [here](#)].

162) [Luthardt, Compendium, p. 3](#). Walther, [L. u. W. 14, 5](#). [Augustine, De Civ. Dei VIII, 1](#) [lines 15-16; English ed. *The City of God here*]: [Verbo Graeco \[theologiae\] significari intelligimus de divinitate rationem sive sermonem](#).

163) In Quenstedt, *Systema* 1, 1. 164) [Comp. ed. Walther, I, 2](#).

As for the use of language (*usus loquendi*), the word theology does not occur in Holy Scriptures. The ancient theologians say: *theologia est vox non έγγραφος, sed άγραφος, quamvis non άντίγραφος*. Regarding the heading of the Revelation of St. John: *3Ιωάννου τον θεολόγον*, Calov remarks according to Gerhard: *Theologi nomen non Iohannes sibi sumpsit, sed qui inscriptionem libri fecit*.¹⁶⁵⁾ With regard to the use of language, it should be further noted that the word theology and theologian is found not only in the Christian Church, but also among the heathen. And this cannot alienate us. Because the heathen know that there is a God,¹⁶⁶⁾ they have also endeavored to have a knowledge and doctrine of God, and have called the people who, in their opinion, have done something special in this respect "theologians" and the result of their effort "theology." Examples of this are abundant.¹⁶⁷⁾ Calov therefore says: *Si primam vocis theologiae impositionem attendas, videtur ea gentilibus tribuenda, a quibus postmodum in ecclesiae usum dimanavit*.¹⁶⁸⁾

As far as the use of language within the Christian Church is concerned, the word "theology" and also the concrete "theologian" have not always been used in the same sense. The following should be remembered in advance: Because the words are not an expression given in Scripture, but an ecclesiastical usage, there should be no dispute about the words either, as long as concepts are connected with the words which do not contradict Scripture,

165) *Biblia Illust.* z. St. 166) Rom. 1 and 2.

167) Aristotle says (*Metaph.* I, 3) of Thales and those who speculated before Thales about the origin of things that they theologized (θεολογήσαντες). According to Josephus (c. Apionem I, 2), Pherekydes of Syros wrote a work as early as the 6th century under the title θεολογία, wherein he philosophized περί τών ουρανίων καί θείων [about the heavens and things divine]. Cicero says (*De Nat. Deorum* III, 21): *Principio Ioves tres numerant ii, qui theologi nominantur*. Augustine mentions (*De Civ. Dei* VI, 6) according to Varro, a contemporary of Cicero, three types of pagan theology: *mythicon genus, quo maxime utuntur poetae, physicon, quo philosophi utuntur, civile, quod populi et sacerdotes nosse et administrare debent*. Augustine's criticism of heathen theology in the same and subsequent chapters is interesting; on the use of the word "theology" by the heathen, cf. Buddeus, *Inst.*, 1741, sqq. 48 sqq. August Hahn, *Lehrb. d. christl. gl.* 2 I, 104 s. C. F. W. Walther, [Lehre u. Wehre 1868, p. 5](#) f.

168) *Isagoge* 2 I, 8.

but are contained in the Scriptures according to their substance. The latter is the case when "theology" is understood:

1. the special knowledge of God and doctrine of God which, according to Scripture, should be peculiar to those who are appointed to the public ministry of preaching in the congregation. The διδακτικός, "apt to teach" (1 Tim. 3:2), describes the special teaching ability of an ἐπίσκοπος who has to supply a congregation of God (1 Tim. 3:5). This will be explained in more detail under the following section;¹⁶⁹⁾

2. the knowledge of God and the doctrine of God of the teachers of the future public teachers, i.e. the knowledge of God of the persons we call theological professors today. Timothy also exercised this activity when he is instructed in 2 Tim. 2:2 that he should command (παράθον) what he heard from the apostle Paul to faithful men who will be able to teach others also;¹⁷⁰⁾

3. the doctrine of God, which belongs to all Christians. Luther remarks on the words Jn. 3:16 ("God so loved the world" etc.): "These are such words that no one can justify or exhaust, and yes, if they were believed correctly, they should make a good theologian or rather a strong, cheerful Christian, who could speak and teach about Christ correctly, judge all other doctrines, yes, counsel and comfort everyone and suffer everything that comes before him."¹⁷¹⁾

169) Quenstedt, I, 13: *Theologia acroamatica est, quae mysteria fidei accuratius et prolixius edocet, confirmat et contrarios sanae doctrinae errores refellit, estque episcoporum et presbyterorum in ecclesia.*

170) Quenstedt, I, 13: *Theologia acroamatica est ... imprimis eorum, qui in academiis non Christianos simpliciter, sed futuros Christianorum doctores informant et κατ' ἐξοχήν theologi dicuntur.* It is interesting to note what Luther says specifically about "doctoral promotions" from time to time. On the one hand, he calls doctoral promotions "masks." On the other hand, he does not reject the thing per se, but he likes it when those who are to be created recognize that the thing itself is nothing, but let themselves be adorned with the doctoral larvae for the service of the word. (XXI a, 564. Cf. also II, 260.)

171) St. L. XI, 1103. Luther also calls the centurion of Capernaum "theologus" with the reasoning that he "disputes so beautifully and Christianly that it would be enough for one who has been a doctor for four years. (XII, 1185.) And on Rom. 12:7 Luther remarks: "See what St. Paul makes for doctores in Scripture, namely, all who have faith, and no one else. These are to judge and adjudicate all doctrines, and their judgment (is to) be valid, it meets alike pope, councils, and all the world." (XII, 335.) Gerhard also mentions, L. *De Nat. Theol.*, § 4, that the word theology is used *pro fide et religione Christiana, quae omnibus fidelibus, doctis aequae ac indoctis, communis est, ut sic theologi dicantur, quicunque norunt fidei articulos*

4. the knowledge and doctrine of individual parts of the Christian religion, namely of the deity of Christ and in connection with it of the Trinity.¹⁷²⁾ This usage of language has been quite universally held down to our time. We, too, call the doctrines of the deity of Christ and the Trinity "theology in the narrower sense," as distinguished from cosmology, anthropology, Christology, ecclesiology, and so on.

In the meanings given, "theology" and "theologian" are used in a sense that is contained in Scripture. On the other hand, there is a use of language contrary to Scripture when theology is supposed to denote a knowledge and doctrine of God and divine things that supposedly goes beyond faith in the Scriptural word or seeks to elevate faith to knowledge. This is the $\pi\rho\acute{o}\tau\omicron\nu\ \psi\epsilon\upsilon\delta\acute{o}\varsigma$ of recent theology in its various shades. We must

iisque assentiuntur. After 1 Petr. 3:15; Col. 3:16 etc. Gerhard could have added what he also says in other places (L. *De Minist. Eccl.*, § 67): *atque eos [articulos fidei] docent et profitentur*. Of course, even among the so-called laity there are again differences in the knowledge of God and doctrinal ability. In our synod the term "lay theologian" is in use. We understand by it such Christians in our midst whose knowledge of Christian doctrines and interest in church matters exceed the average. Such lay theologians existed in the apostolic church, as we may assume from the greeting list Rom. 16. In the great majority of cases, the "lay theologians" have been a blessing to the Church. Cf. [L. u. W. 1860, p. 352](#), on the unjustified fear of "laymen in the synods".

172) Thus, [Gregory of Nazianzus](#) († c. 390) received the epithet δ θεολόγος after publishing his addresses in defense of the divinity of Christ. It is also certain that the Fathers of the Church attached the title of theologian even to John the Evangelist, because he teaches with special emphasis the eternal, essential deity of Christ. Thus Athanasius (in the fourth century) writes of the Gospel of John: Ὁ φηβὶ καὶ ὁ θεολόγος ἀνὴρ ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος. ["As also the theologian says: 'In the beginning was the Word.'"] Theology as the doctrine of the divine nature of Christ is then distinguished by the Fathers of the Church from economy (οικονομία, *dispensatio*) as the doctrine of Christ in his incarnation. Thus Gregory of Nazianzus says: Ἄλλος ἐστὶ λόγος τῆς θεολογίας ἢ τῆς φνσεως, ἄλλος τῆς οικονομίας ["The doctrine of the theology or of the nature is one thing, the doctrine of the economy is another."]. It is connected with this special sense of θεολογία that the verb theologize, is used precisely in the sense of "to confess as God." Walther quotes ([L. u. W. 1868, p. 7](#)) the words of [Athanasius](#) (*De S. Trin. dial. 3. opp. ed. Bonutius II*, 190 sq.): Πὼς γάρ δννη θεολογήσαι τό πνεῦμα, ὁ μή θέλων εἰπεῖν την αὐτήν ουσίαν καὶ 5οξαν καὶ βουλὴν πατρός καὶ υἱοῦ. To designate the doctrine of the mystery of the Trinity [Basil](#) uses "theology" in the words: *Quomodo non erit necessarium silere, ne theologiae dignitas verborum penuria et tenuitate periclitari videatur*. (*Sermo de fide et trinitate*. Opp. I, 371. [L. u. W. 1868, p. 8.](#))

constantly explain to the studying youth that there is not a knowledge but a self-deception and a non-knowledge, if someone thinks to get beyond the faith in the written word of Christ with his knowledge of God and the doctrine of God. This has already been explained in detail under the section "The number of religions in the world".¹⁷³⁾

Since, as has already been noted, the terms "theology" and "theologian" are not a scriptural but only an ecclesiastical expression, we prefer, with older Lutheran theologians, to understand by theology the godliness required for the administration of the public ministry. We therefore understand by theology, taken subjectively or concretely, the efficiency (ικανότης, *habitus*) wrought by the Holy Spirit in a Christian to perform the functions of the public ministry of preaching, that is, to teach God's Word from the Scriptures publicly and especially purely, to refute the false doctrines that arise, and thus to lead sinful men to faith in Christ and to salvation.¹⁷⁴⁾ The individual parts of this definition will be described in more detail later. By theology, taken objectively or as doctrine, we then understand the Christian doctrine (*doctrina*) presented orally or in writing, to the extent and in the form that a steward of the public ministry should hold it.¹⁷⁵⁾ Both of these terms are contained in the substance of Scripture. The subjective term is found 2 Cor. 3:5-6: ἡ ἰκανότης ἡμῶν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ὃς καὶ ἰκάνωσεν ἡμᾶς διακόνους καινῆς διαθήκης. The objective term is present e.g. 2 Tim. 1:13: Ὑποτύπωσιν ἔχει νγιαίνόντων λόγων ὧν παρ ἐμοῦ ἤκουσας.¹⁷⁶⁾ This term is also to be explained in more detail on the basis of Scripture.

173) p. 18 f.

174) Quenstedt: *Theologia habitualiter et concreate considerata est habitus intellectus θεόδοτος practicus per Verbum a Spiritu Sancto homini de vera religione collatus, ut eius opera homo peccator per fidem in Christ ad Deum et salutem aeternam perducatur.* [[Google](#)] (Systema I, 16.) Likewise Gerhard (L. De Natura Theologiae, § 31).

175) Quenstedt, 1, 16: *Theologia, systematice et abstractive spectata, est doctrina ex Verbo Dei exstructa, qua homines in fide vera et vita pia erudiuntur ad vitam aeternam, vel est doctrina e revelatione divina hausta, monstrans, quomodo homines de Dei per Christ cultu ad vitam aeternam informandi.* [[Google](#)]

176) It is by no means a witty mockery when, in the interest of "doctrinal freedom," it has been asked whether perhaps the apostle Paul had written a "normative

Of course, theology, conceived as efficiency (Ικανότης), is the first and proper concept of the word, while theology, conceived as doctrine, can be called theology only in the second and derivative sense of the word, because "theology must first be in the soul of man before it can be addressed by him, presented in speech or writing."¹⁷⁷⁾

 dogmatics" in the form of Hutter's *Compendium Locorum Theologicorum*. From 2 Tim. 1:13, this much is clear: 1. That Timothy heard from the apostle Paul νηαίνοντες λόγοι, that is, words expressing pure divine truth, not corrupted by human opinion; 2. That the apostle did not recite them to Timothy for entertainment or mere amusement, but as νποτυπωσις, image, model, pattern, *norma sanorum verborum*, by which Timothy was to be guided in his teaching ministry, which is still more particularly expressed by the έχε, "Hold!" "Hold fast!" is expressed. Thus, if we do not reinterpret the words, it will probably come down to a "normal dogmatics" that we have heard. Plitt z. St.: "What I have given you be your original, sound words, sound doctrine, as Tit. 1:9; 1 Tim. 3:9 in opposition to false doctrines." Matthies z. St.: "νποτυπωσις, as 1 Tim. 1:16, the distinct basic form, the original and model, the standard represented." Huther in Meyer's Commentary wants to translate only "image," and adds, "If de Wette, Wiesinger, and others translate νποτυπωσις just by 'model,' so also Luther, this is inaccurate, since the relation expressed herein is not in the word itself." But the relation is demanded by the context. An image to be followed is *eo ipso* a model.

177) Thus Walther, L. u. W. 14, 9. Musäus, Introd. in Theol. 1679, p. 3: *Doctrina de Deo rebusque divinis provenit ab habitu theologiae estque eius effectus*. Luthardt, Comp. 10, p. 4, does indeed want to excuse the old Lutheran theologians when they grasped theology *primo loco* as a personal attribute, namely as the aptitude to teach Word of God and to lead sinners to salvation; but he nevertheless adds reprovingly: "In that definition, however, both the direct relation of theology to salvation and its version as a personal quality, though meant in the best sense of religious seriousness, are not scientifically correct." This criticism also has no discernible meaning from Luthardt's point of view. When he describes theology with Kahnis as "the scientific self-consciousness of the church," he likewise conceives of theology as a "personal quality," since every "self-consciousness," including "scientific" self-consciousness, presupposes persons to whom it attaches as a quality. An impersonal self-consciousness is a contradiction in terms. In fact, Luthardt wants to have thought also of persons within the church, namely of the theologians, who, in contrast to the ordinary Christians, possess a scientific self-consciousness. Only this does not agree with the assertion that theology is "the scientific self-consciousness of the church," because the theologians, especially also those who are endowed with scientific self-consciousness, are not the church, thank God.

9. The more detailed description of theology, conceived as aptitude. [^]

We have a closer description of theology, conceived as "aptitude" or "personal quality", in the numerous scriptural statements describing the persons who, according to God's will and order, are to be entrusted with the teaching office in the Church. Very correctly it has been said, "Since theology, subjectively considered, is that which it is to be in those who are to administer the office of teaching in the Church, we have to look for and recognize in the biblical description of a right teacher at the same time that of a right theologian."¹⁷⁸⁾ The following main moments are given in Scripture:

1) Theological ability is a spiritual ability (*habitus spiritualis, supernaturalis*), that is, an ability which in every case, apart from natural gifts, requires personal faith in Christ (faith in the forgiveness of sins by grace for the sake of Christ's *satisfactio vicaria*, conversion or rebirth). Unbelievers, even if they have taken all biblical doctrines into their minds and can teach by virtue of a natural endowment, are not theologians in the sense of Holy Scriptures. Expressed dogmatically: There is no "*theologia irrogenitorum*" [theology of the unregenerate].¹⁷⁹⁾ Explicitly, the fitness to administer the public teaching office is described as a spiritual effect of God, 2 Cor. 3:6: Not that we are competent of ourselves, but ἡ ἰκανότης ἡμῶν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, ὅς καὶ ἱκάνωσεν ἡμᾶς κτλ. All unbelievers are dwelling and working places not of the Holy Spirit, but of the prince of this world.¹⁸⁰⁾ Furthermore, we see that in Scripture the ministerial gifts always appear only in connection with the personal Christian state and the Christian gifts. In the description of an ἐπίσκοπος, 1 Tim. 3:1 ff, the "doctrinal" (διδασκτικός) stands next to the predicates "not a winebibber," etc. Also 2 Tim. 2, 1 ff. the apostle Paul attributes the ability to administer the public teaching office to the grace

178) So Walther after the procedure of the older Lutheran theologians, L. u. W. 14, 10.

179) Cf. Walch, *Bibliotheca Theol.* II, 667 sqq. Baumgarten, *Theol. Streitigkeiten* III, 425 f. Rich material on the controversial question in Hollaz, *Examen Proleg.* I, qu. 18-21.

180) Eph. 2:3.

of God in Christ with the words, "Be strong therefore, my son, by the grace of God in Christ Jesus!" The unconverted are in the public teaching ministry only by God's permission, against God's order. Yet, through their ministry, provided they have outwardly learned God's Word and are presenting it. Men can be converted and saved, because the effectiveness of the means of grace is not cancelled by the personal condition of those who administer them. That theological aptitude always presupposes the personal state of Christianity is expressed by the ancient theologians by describing aptitude in more detail as θεόσδοτος, *a Spiritu Sancto per Verbum Dei collatus*. Baier also says:¹⁸¹⁾ *Constat, theologiam esse habitum in substantia sua supernaturalem, actibus nostris quidem, sed per vires gratiae et operationem Spiritus Sancti acquisitum*. He adds: the "theology" which consists only in an external knowledge and doctrines of the truths present in the Scriptures, *sicut in homines non renatos et impios cadit*, without the "real", "supernatural" assent wrought by the Holy Spirit: *ita nonnisi aequivoce dicta theologia est*. That this truth was emphasized "primarily by Spener" is not historically correct. Baier also points out that Spener himself refutes this assertion in the treatise "Die allgemeine Gottesgelehrtheit," P. I, qu. V, p. 185 sqq, ubi [by Spener] *multorum theologorum nostratium loca consona afferuntur*. Luther says in regard to the spiritual character of theological aptitude, "One finds more pagan and human conceits than holy, certain doctrines of Scripture in the theologians. How shall we do to him now? I know of no other counsel than a humble prayer to God that He may give us doctors of theology. Doctors of art, of medicine, of law, of philosophy may be made by the pope, emperors, and universities; but only be sure that no one will make you a doctor of Holy Scriptures but the Holy Spirit from heaven, as Christ says John 6:45: 'They must all be taught by God Himself.'"¹⁸²⁾ Spiritual aptitude naturally also includes the Christian conviction, wrought by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, that the Holy Scriptures are the infallible Word of God, as will be explained in more detail in a moment.

181) Compendium, ed. Walther, I, 69.

182) St. L. X, 339 f.; Erl. 21, 348 f.; Walch X, 383 f.

2. Theological aptitude includes the ability to teach only the Word of God, that is, the ability to refrain from all thoughts of one's own and other men about God and divine things and to take the doctrine to be presented only from the Word of God, that is, for our time, from the Holy Scriptures. Of all who have not this ability, it is said in 1 Tim. 6:3, "If any man teach otherwise, and abide not in the sound doctrines of our Lord JEsu Jesus Christ, he is darkened, and knoweth nothing," τετύφωται, μηδέν επιστάμενος. But Christ's words we have in the words of his apostles and prophets.¹⁸³⁾ It is therefore contrary to aptitude for the Christian magisterium, and disqualifies for the same, if any one should take the doctrine to be taught in the Christian church not from the Holy Scriptures alone, but also, for example, from alleged immediate revelations (enthusiasts) or from the so-called "Christian consciousness", "faith consciousness", the "reborn I", the "Christian experience" (modern theologians) or from the decrees of the pope and the "church" (Roman and Romanizing Protestants) or from "history", etc. Luther: "Jeremiah wrote a whole chapter about the false prophets, Jer. 23. Among other words he says thus (v. 16): 'Thus says God, the Lord of hosts: You shall not hearken to the word of the prophets who preach to you; they deceive you, preaching their own heart's vision or conceit, and not from the mouth of God.' Behold, all the prophets that preach not out of the mouth of God, they deceive, and God forbid, they shall not be heard. Is not the passage clear, that where God's Word is not preached, there no one shall listen, even by the divine majesty's commandment and disgrace, and be vain deceit? O pope, o bishops, o priests, o monks, o theologians, where will you pass by here? Do you think that it is a small thing for the high majesty to declare what does not come from the mouth of God and is something other than the Word of God? Not a thresher or a shepherd has said this. When you heard your Lord say to you, "Who told you to do this? I did not command you to do this; I fear you would hear so much from it, you should not have done it and should have shunned it as a prohibition."¹⁸⁴⁾

183) Jn 17:20; 1 Pet 1:10-12; Eph 2:20.

184) [St. L. XIX, 821 f.](#)

3. Theological aptitude includes the ability to teach the whole Word of God, as it is revealed in the Holy Scriptures. The apostle Paul says of his teaching ministry, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.," *πάσαν την βουλὴν τον θεοῦ*.¹⁸⁵⁾ Only in proclaiming the whole counsel of God do public teachers remain innocent of the perishing of their hearers, as Paul testifies of himself: "I am pure from all blood."¹⁸⁶⁾ Since, according to God's order, the whole Christian doctrine is to be taught without subtraction or addition of "publicly and otherwise," it may be recalled in this connection that great diligence is necessary both on the part of the students of theology for the attainment of theological proficiency and on the part of the teachers already in office for the preservation and increase of theological proficiency. Therefore, the apostle's exhortation to Timothy says: "Take heed to yourself and to the doctrines; persevere in these matters. For where thou doest these things, thou shalt save thyself, and they that hear thee."¹⁸⁷⁾

4. Theological efficiency includes the ability to refute false teachers. In the description of the qualities that should be found in an elder or bishop, Tit. 1:9-11 says: *δυνατός ... τους αντιλέγοντας ελέγχειν ... ονς δεῖ ἐπιστομίζειν*. The demand, sometimes made, that the public teacher abstain from polemics, is therefore against the Scriptures. Forbidden in Scripture is strife about unnecessary things, e.g., genealogies, Tit. 3:9: "But foolish questions, genealogies, quarrels and disputes about the law, abstain (*περιῖστασο*), for they are useless and vain."¹⁸⁸⁾ Forbidden also is polemic from carnal zeal, 2 Cor. 10:3: *Ἐν σαρκὶ περιπατοῦντες ὡς κατὰ σάρκα στρατηνόμεθα*. It is also well to note that Tit. 1:9 is preceded by the *δυνατός τους αντιλέγοντας ελέγχειν* the *δυνατός παρακαλεῖν ἐν τη διδασκαλίᾳ τῇ νηγιαίνονση*. This expresses the fact that the refutation of false doctrine must be preceded by the presentation of right doctrine,

185) Acts 20:27.

186) Acts

20:26.

187) 1 Tim. 4:16.

188) Also Quenstedt reminds, *Systema* I, 14: *In theologia polemica id praecipue cavendum, ne quaestiones otiosae cumulentur, et lites ex litibus serantur, atque ita fiat theologia eristica et contentiosa, qua nimium altercando veritas amittitur.* [[Google](#)]

so that the listener is enabled to recognize the polemic as justified and to participate inwardly. If this order is not observed, the teacher easily brings himself under suspicion of contentiousness and unjust judging. But to exclude polemics from the public teaching office is contrary to Scripture. It is expressly commanded to the teachers, as we already saw from Tit. 1:9-11 and are so abundantly instructed by the whole Scripture. All prophets and apostles and Christ Himself have also bound the rejection of false doctrines with the proclamation of right doctrine. Walther does not go too far when he writes: "Whoever presents the pure doctrine, but does not punish and refute the false doctrine opposed to it, does not warn against the wolves in sheep's clothing, that is, against the false prophets, and does not expose them, is not a faithful steward over God's mysteries, not a faithful shepherd of the sheep entrusted to him, not a faithful watchman on the battlements of Zion, but according to the Word of God a mischievous servant, a dumb dog, a traitor. How many souls are lost because of this, and how much damage the church suffers because of not practicing doctrinal refutation, is too obvious to need proof. Not only is the right doctrine usually grasped only when the opposite has become clear, but the false teachers also seek to surround their error so cunningly with the appearance of truth that the simple are all too easily deceived, despite their love of the truth, without any warning they have experienced beforehand. In vain does the pastor attempt to wash his hands of the matter, because he has preached the truth, if he has not at the same time warned against error, and that too, under certain circumstances, by mentioning the name of the false spirits, when his sheep become a prey to ravening wolves in sheep's clothing, either while he is still in charge, or yet after he has had to leave them."¹⁸⁹⁾ As for the "forbearing spirit," we must also remember here the difference between the state and the church. We must distinguish between the toleration of false doctrines in the state and in the church. The Christian Church of the New Testament is not commanded to expel false teachers from the state or civil society, which would require the use of external power, which is forbidden to the Church.

189) *Pastorale*, p. [82](#) f. [*Pastoral Theology*, p. 101]

However, the church is commanded not to tolerate false teachers in the church, but to fight them with the Word of God. The commanded fight with the Word of God includes recognizing the false teachers as such, namely as those who deviate from the word of the apostle,¹⁹⁰⁾ to refute them,¹⁹¹⁾ to isolate them, that is, not to hold any fellowship with them¹⁹²⁾ and possibly, if they do not avoid church themselves, to formally exclude them from the church fellowship.¹⁹⁸⁾

5. Finally, theological aptitude includes the ability to suffer for the sake of Christian doctrine. This part of theological aptitude is also abundantly indicated in Scripture. The apostle Paul calls out to Timothy: *κακοπάθησον*, and that is *μέχρι δεσμών*.¹⁹⁴⁾ Suffering is therefore a necessary quality of a Christian teacher, because the gospel of being saved by faith in Christ crucified without the works of the law is so not to the taste of the world, but *Ἰουδαίοις μὲν σκάνδαλον, Ἑλλήσι δὲ μωρία*.¹⁹⁵⁾ Christ therefore presents Christians with the prognostic for life in this world: *Ἔσεσθε μισούμενοι πρὸ πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν διὰ τὸ ὄνομά μου*.¹⁹⁶⁾ This hatred naturally and experientially turns especially against the teachers who are in public office.¹⁹⁷⁾ If these are not capable of suffering, of renouncing property, honor, position, even life and limb, they will compromise with error or fall away altogether and thus lose salvation.¹⁹⁸⁾ Hence Paul's exhortation to Timothy, "Be strong therefore, my son, through grace in Jesus Christ."¹⁹⁹⁾

190) Rom. 16:17: *οκοπεῖν τοὺς τὰς διχοστασίας καὶ τὰ σκάνδαλα παρὰ τὴν διδασχὴν ἣν νμεῖς ἐμάθετε, ποιοῦντας.*

191) Tit. 1:9, 11: *ἐλέγχειν, ἐπιστομίζειν.*

192) Rom. 16:17: *ἐκκλίνετε ἀπ' αὐτῶν.* 2 John 10: *χαίρειν αὐτῷ (the false teacher) μὴ λέγετε.*

193) The apostle's procedure regarding Hymenaeus and Alexander, 1 Tim. 1:20; cf. 2 Tim. 2:17; 4:14.

194) 2 Tim. 2:3, 9.

195) 1 Cor. 1:23.

196) Matt. 24:9.

197) Acts 9:16: "I will show him (Paul) how much he must suffer for my name's sake." Acts 26:21 Paul reports, "They went about (επιερώντο) to kill me."

198) 2 Tim. 2:12: *εἰ ἀρνούμεθα κακῆινος ἀρνήσεται ἡμᾶς.*

199) 2 Tim. 2:1, 8

10. The more detailed description of theology, conceived as doctrines. [^]

Because theology, taken subjectively or as doctrinal aptitude, is the fitness (ικανότης) to teach no more and no less than God's Word,²⁰⁰⁾ which the Church of our time possesses in the written Word of the apostles and prophets,²⁰¹⁾ so theology, taken objectively or as doctrine (*doctrina*), is nothing other than the presentation of the doctrine present in Holy Scriptures. What the Holy Scriptures say in several or even many places about the individual doctrines according to text and context, the theologian puts together in one place. This is how the doctrine is formed, which the Christian theologian presents orally or in writings. The old Lutheran theologians say of theology, conceived as the presentation of Christian doctrine (*theologia positiva*), that it is nothing other than Scripture itself arranged into the individual doctrines. Therefore, in the *body of doctrine* (*corpus doctrinae*), no element, even if it were the smallest, could be found that did not have its support in the rightly understood Scripture.²⁰²⁾ Likewise, Luther describes the teaching activity of all theologians after the time of the apostles. He calls the theologians, including himself, "catechumens and disciples of the prophets", "as we say and preach what we have heard and learned from the prophets and apostles".²⁰³⁾ Such is Luther's seriousness about mere "imitating" on the part of theologians that he says in negative stipulation, "No other doctrine shall be taught and heard in the church than the pure Word of God, that is, the Holy Scriptures, or teachers and hearers shall be accursed with their doctrine."²⁰⁴⁾ The same truth

200) 1 Petr. 4:11: Εἰς τὴν λαλῆν, ὡς λόγια θεοῦ. The doctrine in force in the church is ἡ διδασκαλία τῶν ἀποστόλων θεοῦ, Tit. 2:10.

201) What the apostles taught orally, the same (ταῦτα) they also wrote, 1 John 1:3, 4.

202) Aug. Pfeiffer, *Thesaurus hermeneut*, p. 6, also quoted in Walther-Baier I, 43. 76: *Theologia positiva, si rem recte aestimemus, nihil aliud est ... quam ipsa Scriptura Sacra in certos locos concinno ordine et perspicua methodo redacta, unde ne unicum quidem membrum, quantillum etiam, in illo doctrinae corpore esse debet, quod non e Scriptura Sacra probe intellecta statuminetur.* [[Google](#)]

203) In the exposition of the last words of David, 2 Sam. 23:1 ff. St. L. III, 1890.

204) *Comment, ad Gal.*, ed. Erl. I, 91: *Neque alia doctrina in ecclesia tradi et audiri debet quam purum Verbum Dei, hoc est, Sancta Scriptura, vel doctores et auditores cum sua doctrina anathema sunt.* [[Google](#)]

is expressed even more briefly in the well-known axiom: *Quod non est biblicum, non est theologicum*.

Therefore, for the closer characterization of the doctrine that has its home in the Christian Church, it belongs that the Christian theologian does not have to teach changeable human opinions and views, but the unchangeable divine truth or God's own doctrine (*doctrinam divinam*). This nature of Christian doctrine is given by the nature of the source, that is, by the nature of Holy Scriptures, from which the Christian theologian draws the doctrine he presents. Because the Holy Scriptures, according to the testimony of Christ and His apostles, and also according to their self-attestation in the hearts of Christians, are God's own infallible Word, so also the doctrine taken from the Scriptures is not κατά την παράδοσιν των ανθρώπων, that is, not doctrine of men (Col. 2:8), but God's own doctrine, ἡ διδασκαλία του σωτήρος ημών θεου (Tit. 2:10). Because modern theology does not accept the Scriptures as the Word of God and therefore takes refuge in its own inner self, in the theological ego, from the Scriptures, which in its opinion are unreliable, and makes this ego the source of reference for Christian doctrine, the doctrine which presents itself for acceptance in the Church of God is thus in principle moved away from the area of objective divine truth and transferred to the area of subjective human view. In this state of affairs, it seems appropriate to elaborate on the point of the nature of the doctrines justified in the Christian church.

We hold: Because the Holy Scriptures are not the word of man, but the Word of God, the closer description of theology, objectively or conceived as doctrine, is that the *doctrine* (*doctrina e Scriptura Sacra hausta*) created by the theologian from the Scriptures is divine doctrine, *doctrina divina*. And not only in the sense that it is about God and divine things, but precisely and *primo loco* in the sense that it is God's own doctrine, view and judgment in contrast to all human doctrines, views and judgments about God and divine things.

To illustrate: The Christian theologian teaches of the creation of the world and man what God teaches about it Gen. 1 and 2 and otherwise in Scripture. What is said in human writings about the origin of the world and of man,

the theologian takes careful note of because it involves his profession in the present, but dismisses it as worthless human opinion unless it agrees with God's own account of creation which we have in Scripture. The Christian theologian teaches about the Fall and sin no more and no less than what God reports, teaches and judges about it in Holy Scriptures. The Christian theologian also has to take note at this point of a whole number of human views about the origin of sin and about the character of sin and its consequences. But he, on his part, brings under antithesis everything that contradicts God's thesis in Scripture, which cannot be broken. The Christian theologian teaches as Christian doctrine of the redemption of mankind fallen in sin and guilty before God, namely, of the eternal Son of God's incarnation, person, and work, only what God Himself teaches about these great things (τα μεγαλεία του Θεού), which never came into a man's heart (επι καρδίαν ανθρώπου οὐκ ἀνέβη),²⁰⁵⁾ but were hidden from the world, but are now revealed by the prophets' writings at the command of the eternal God (διὰ τε γραφῶν προφητικῶν κατ ἐπιταγὴν του αἰωνίου Θεοῦ).²⁰⁶⁾ Especially in the doctrine of redemption, the Christian theologian of the present day is confronted with the fact that modern theology criticizes, declares "too juridical" and rejects the divine method of redemption, especially the vicarious satisfaction of Christ (*satisfactio vicaria*). But this criticism of the divine method of redemption from the human point of view only has the effect on the Christian theologian that he presents the redemption, which according to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments took place through the vicarious satisfaction of Christ,²⁰⁷⁾ all the more decisively from the Scriptures. And as for the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*, the doctrine of obtaining justification before God, the Christian theologian teaches that man obtains the forgiveness of his sins by faith (πίσται), that is, by believing in the gospel, which confers the forgiveness of sins for the sake of Christ's

205) 1 Cor. 2:9; Jn. 1:18.

206) Rom. 16:25-26. Eph. 3:7-12 in more detail.

207) The detailed account under the section "The vicarious satisfaction" II, 407-454.

vicarious satisfaction, without law and without works of law (χωρίς νόμου, χωρίς έργων νόμου), that is, without any good moral condition of his own and without any performance of his own on the part of man. Neither by Rome's curse, nor by the contradiction of degenerate Protestantism, which rejects the divine method of justification as too external and juridical, nor even by the contradiction of his own natural heart, to which, after all, the "*opinio legis*" adheres naturally, can the Christian theologian be induced to change the doctrine of justification attested in Scripture, "even though heaven and earth, and whatever will not abide, should sink to ruin."²⁰⁸⁾ As such, every Christian theologian is also always a practical theologian. And it is precisely at the central doctrine of the forgiveness of sins that his own "experience" warns him. He thinks of how terrible it would be if the sinner, struck by the law of God, should depend for the forgiveness of his sins on human views instead of God's own revealed doctrines. And so through all parts of Christian doctrine, including the doctrines of eternal damnation and eternal salvation. In short, the Christian theologian teaches from "God's book," as Luther calls the Scriptures, God's own doctrine, *doctrinam divinam*, in opposition to all human thoughts and views.

This nature of the doctrine to be presented in the Christian church, that it must be *doctrina divina*, is demanded throughout the Scriptures themselves. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are full of warnings against all teachers who do not merely teach the Word of God, but allow themselves to present their own views. We read in the prophet Jeremiah the powerful words: "Thus says the Lord of hosts: Harken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain:" (הַנְּבִיאִים לִבְהִיטָה, [HEBREW: Jer. 23:16], that is, their' own view) "and not from the Lord's mouth."²⁰⁹⁾ The same prohibition against teaching human thoughts and views and the same binding of all teachers to God's mouth is expressed throughout the New Testament. Whoever opens his mouth to teach in the church, which is, after all, "God's house,"²¹⁰⁾ is to speak God's word (λόγια θεός).²¹¹⁾

208) Schmalk. Art. M. 300, 5. [Trigl., 461, 5 

209) Jer. 23:16. parallels: Jer. 14:14; 27:14-16; Klagl. 2:14; Ezek. 13:2 ff.

210) 1 Tim. 3:15.

He who teaches otherwise (ἐτεροδιδασκαλεῖ), and does not abide by the sound words of Christ which we have in the word of his apostles,²¹²⁾ is disqualified for the teaching office in the Christian church, because, instead of teaching divine truth, he is puffed up in his own human opinion, τετόφωτα, knows nothing, μη επιστάμενος, but is sick with disputations and strifes of words (νοσῶν περί ζητήσεως καὶ λογομαχίας)²¹³⁾ Therefore, as in the Old, so also in the New Testament, Christians are instructed,²¹⁴⁾ to all teachers, who do not bring Christ's doctrine (την διδασχὴν του Χριστου), that is, God's doctrine, to be denied Christian fellowship, because such teachers cause divisions and offences in the church by their own doctrine, which they allow themselves (τ διχοστασίας και τά σκάνδαλα ηιοιῶντες), depriving Christians of the goods of their Christian state (τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς πονηροῖς), not doing the precious work of a Christian teacher, but incurring evil works (τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς πονηροῖς). So decidedly is it required in Scripture that the doctrine preached in the Christian Church is God's own doctrine, *doctrina divina*.

How powerfully Luther insists on *doctrina divina* in the Christian church in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, we already saw from his remark on Jer. 23:16, in which he addresses the theologians thus: "O theologians, where do you want to pass here? Do you think that it is a small thing for the high majesty to reject what does not come from the mouth of God and is something other than the Word of God?"²¹⁵⁾ Luther was so concerned about the nature of the doctrine to be taught in the Christian church that he inculcated the *necessitas doctrinae divinae in ecclesia tradendae et audiendae* from several points of view. Thus in the distinction between church and state. In the "secular and domestic government," Luther says, human views and human words have their justification, because this area is subject to the "natural light," that is, to human reason. On the other hand, with regard to doctrines in the church, he says: "If anyone wishes to preach, let him be silent of his words." " Here in the church he should speak nothing

211) 1 Petr. 4:11. Luther: "This is so that he may be sure that he is speaking the Word of God and not his own word. (XII, 443.)

212) Jn. 8:31-32, compare with Jn. 17:20.

213) 1 Tim. 6:4.

214) 2 John 8-11; Rom. 16:17.

215) Quoted under the previous section, p. 52.

but this rich landlord's [God's] word; otherwise it is not the true church. Therefore it must be thus: God is speaking."²¹⁶⁾ From here we understand Luther's strange-sounding word that Christian doctrine does not "belong in the Lord's Prayer." Luther wants to inculcate the rule that the pastor should not have to ask God for forgiveness of sins for the doctrines he presents.²¹⁷⁾ Rather, the pastor must be certain that he has not preached his own word, but God's, which "God neither should nor can forgive, but confirm, praise, crown, and say: You have taught rightly, for I have spoken through you, and the Word is mine." So serious is Luther about the requirement that the doctrine presented within the church must be God's own doctrine that he adds: "Whoever cannot boast such things of his sermon, let him only stop preaching, for he is certainly lying and blaspheming God."²¹⁸⁾ Luther deals with the same subject when describing the authority of the Christian church. He denies the church any authority to make Christian doctrines or to set articles of faith, and justifies this with the fact that the church has and proclaims no word of its own at all, but only Christ's word. Of any doctrine that is not Christ's Word, he says, "Though much babbling be done apart from God's Word, yet is not the church in babbling.... Let them cry and rave, 'Church, Church!'; without God's Word it is nothing."²¹⁹⁾ — And Luther wants this to be applied also to these teachers in the church, who in the eminent sense are called theologians, theologians κατ' ἐξοχὴν, namely to the professors of theology. A part of the more recent theologians has taken the position that the plain pastor may, indeed should, be content to present the doctrine available in Scripture, but that university theologians, who have to represent science, are not to be subjected to these restrictions.²²⁰⁾ On the other hand, Luther also demands of the

216) St. L. XII, 1413 f. 217) St. L. XVII, 1343 f.

218) St. L. VIII, 37. 219) St. L. XII, 1414.

220) Thus, for example, Kahnis in a very pronounced manner in *Zeugnis von den Grundwahrheiten des Protestantismus gegen Dr. Hengstenberg, Leipzig 1862, p. 133*: "I have written my dogmatics not for the Christian people, not for educated non-theologians, but only for scientific theologians. However, after Dr. Hengstenberg and Dr. Münkler have brought the matter into wider circles in a thoroughly unjustified manner, I have at least had to address wider

University theologians the strictest discipline of thought. They should relentlessly eliminate all thoughts about God and divine things that are not expressed in clear scriptural words. He cites his own example for this. He says that we cannot avoid having our own thoughts when dealing with the high things concerning God and divine things. He, too, had many thoughts of his own. But God had given him the grace to let those thoughts fall out again that came to him without a word. Luther comes to this point when Zwingli and his comrades reproached him with lack of "spirit" and called his clinging to the words of the Scriptures head knowledge, service to the letter, spiritless theology etc.. Luther, on the other hand, remarked that he had more thoughts of his own than all the enthusiasts put together. However, he let such thoughts go because they have no right of home in the church. He writes:²²¹⁾ "O how many fine ideas I have had in the Scriptures, which I have had to let go, which, if an enthusiast had had them, would have been too few for him." Luther, as we have already heard, calls all teachers who really stand under the direction of the Holy Spirit "catechumens and disciples of the prophets," "as whom we repeat and preach what we have heard and learned from the prophets and apostles."²²²⁾ People have bristled at this "retelling" as a description of a Christian teacher's doctrines. But Luther does not understand the "repeat" as if the Christian teacher "should not need more or different words than are written in Scripture";

 circles than the readers of my Dogmatics in this writing. [P. 118 f.](#) against Pastor Münkelt in particular: "I cannot imagine that Pastor Münkelt, who signs himself Doctor of Theology, understands so little of theology that he should not know that there are difficulties which must be discussed. Of course, such studies are not for the people. But who brings them to the people? Such papers as Pastor Münkelt writes to themselves. ... So he, this intermediary between science and the people, who does not really belong to either circle, he confuses the people, not me. If Pastor Münkelt can't stand the heights where avalanches and boulders fall, let him stay in the [Lüneburg Heath](#) with the sheep herds, tend bees and grow asparagus." Thus Kahnis speaks from his standpoint that Holy Scriptures are not "the inspired textbook of pure doctrine" ([p. 127](#)) and therefore what Christian doctrine is must first be determined by the science of theologians.

221) [St. L. XX, 792](#). ed. 30, 46.

222) [St. L. III, 1890](#). ed. 37, 12.

stand"; for "this cannot be kept."²²³⁾ However, Luther wants to emphatically inculcate that the Christian teacher "should not teach anything in doctrines divine apart from the Scriptures. The content of his doctrine should be a mere reproduction of the doctrines of the prophets and apostles, that is, *doctrina divina*, without any admixture of his own human views. For this, Luther adds, is the characteristic of all faithful teachers who, after the time of the apostles, administer the doctrine in the church, that they "put nothing of their own nor new, as the prophets do, but teach what they have from the prophets." The teachers at the theological institutions of the Missouri Synod do not exaggerate when they remind the students to carefully examine their prepared sermons once again to see whether a "scripture-less" thought [Luther's expression] has not crept in, and to delete it relentlessly, because as an ego product it has no justification in God's church, which is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.

As for the old Lutheran theologians, it was already pointed out at the beginning of this section that Christian theology, conceived as doctrine, was to them nothing but an ordered compilation of the divine doctrine present in the Holy Scriptures. Hence their definitions of the *doctrinal* object of theology: *doctrina e revelatione divina hausta*, *doctrina ex Verbo Dei exstructa*, etc. Hence also their admonition that in the church *doctrinae corpus* belongs only that which can be proved to be present in Scripture. To emphasize this nature of Christian doctrine, the ancient theologians called theology, conceived as doctrine, also *theologia έκτυπος*, exemplary theology, that is, a reproduction or imprint of *theologia αρχέτυπος*, the archetypal theology, that is, of the knowledge of God and divine things, which is originally found only in God, but which God by his grace has imparted or communicated to men through his Word. This terminology is not superfluous and obsolete, as has been thought,²²⁴⁾ but quite scriptural and very instructive to theologians of all ages. Of more recent theologians, Rudelbach has acknowledged this. He says: "I do not know whether anyone

223) St. L. XVI, 2212.

224) Bretschneider, Systematische Entwicklung aller in der Dogmatik vorkommenden Begriffes p. 68.

has called attention to the Scriptural ground of this division [into ἀρχέτυπος and ἐκτύπος], this concept of theology. Alone, where could it well be sought than in the words of the Lord Matt. 11:27: 'No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son, and to whom the Son wills to reveal it.'"²²⁵⁾ Our ancient theologians have amply demonstrated the scriptural basis. Scherzer: *Theologia ἀρχέτυπος est ipsius Dei de se ipso cognitio*, Matt. 11:27; 1 Cor. 2:10 f.²²⁶⁾ The ancient theologians state the following thoughts: 1. Only God knows God; for us men God dwells in a light inaccessible to us, 1 Cor. 2:10, 11; Jn. 1:18a; Matt. 11:27 — 1 Tim. 6:16. 2. God has stepped out of the light that is inaccessible to us men through self-revelation. The divine self-revelation is present in two ways: in God's kingdom of nature and in his Word. The self-revelation present in the kingdom of nature (Rom. 1:19 ff. 32; 2:14. 15; Acts 14:17; 17:26. 27) is the source of knowledge of natural theology; the self-revelation present in God's Word (Jn. 1:18b; 8:31-32; Eph. 2. 20) is the only source of knowledge of Christian theology. Therefore, only the theology that is ἐκτύπος, as it is, is the only reproduction of the divine doctrine that is fixed in the Holy Scriptures. One can read about this in Gerhard.²²⁷⁾ *Theologia* ἐκτύπος is factually nothing else than when Luther says of the Christian teachers after the time of the Apostles

225) *Zeitschr. f. luth. Theol. u. K.* 1848, I, 7. Quoted in [Baier-Walther I, 5](#).

226) *Systema, Proleg. de Theologia*, p. 2. In Quenstedt, *Systema* I, 5 sq., under Thesis IV.

227) Gerhard says, *L. de de Natura Theologiae*, § 15 sqq, on the division of theology into *theologiam ἀρχέτυπον καὶ ἐκτύπον*: 'Ἀρχέτυπος seu πρωτότυπος est in Deo Creatore, qua Deus seipsum novit in seipso et extra se universa per seipsum actu scientiae individuo et immutabili...'. 'Ἐκτύπος theologia est ex priori quasi expressa et efformata per gratiosam communicationem. [[Google](#)] The means of communication of knowledge, which is originally only in God, is the external Word, *quo [Deus] in tempore homines alloquitur*. From this follows for Christian theology: *principium theologiae supernaturalis adaequatum et proprium esse divinam revelationem, quae cum hodie non nisi in sacris literis, hoc est, in prophetis Veteris et apostolicis Novi Testamenti libris descripta exstet, inde scriptum Dei Verbum sive, quod idem est, Scripturam Sacram dicimus esse unicum et proprium theologiae principium*. [[Google](#)] Likewise and in more detail Quenstedt, *Systema* I, 5 sqq.

that they are not "prophets" but "children of the prophets", "catechumens and disciples of the prophets", because they only repeat and preach what they have heard and learned from the prophets. And when, for example, Scherzer brings theology, insofar as it does not correspond to the original type present in Scripture (*theologia αρχέτυπος*), under the category of *mataeologia* (vain theology) and calls it heretical, void babble,²²⁸⁾ this is also nothing new, but the same as when Luther had said that everything that is taught in the church without Scripture is not church doctrine, but calls it "babble".

This character of the Christian doctrine, that it must be *doctrina divina* in contrast to all human thoughts and views, is, as was already noted at the beginning, completely abandoned by modern theology in principle. The reason for this is its changed position towards Holy Scriptures. Whom: Luther makes it the: Christian: theologians to drop out again every thought which is not taken from the words of Scripture, and if the dogmatists call a teacher Christian only in so far as his doctrine is *theologia έκτυπος*, merely reproduction of the doctrine of Scripture, this has its reason in the fact that they — Luther as well as the dogmatists — hold the Holy Scriptures to be God's own Word or "God's mouth." Because modern theologians reject this position on Scripture²²⁹⁾ and consider it the only scientifically correct method if they withdraw from "the pious consciousness of the theologizing subject,"²³⁰⁾ thus theology is set on the subjective human view instead of the objective divine truth. We have the situation described in the more familiar: Luther's words, which Hase prefixes to his *Hutterus Redivivus* as a motto: "Everyone wants to be in the shop for sale, not that they want to reveal Christ

228) *Systema*, p. 2: *In quantum [viatorum theologia] illud αρχέτυπον in Verbo nobis revelatum refert et exprimit, in tantum theologia vera est. Quae ab illo archetypo recedit, falsa et haeretica mataeologia est.*

229) Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 258: "In the present day the orthodox doctrine of inspiration has hardly any dogmatic significance." Horst Stephan, *Glaubenslehre*, 1921, p. 52: "Today the doctrine of inspiration has been abandoned by scientific theology; it is only in lay orthodoxy ... where it still has a strong effect."

230) Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 12 ff. 15: "No one bases his dogmatics in the old Protestant way on the *norma normans*" (Bible).

or his mystery, but that they want to have their own mystery and beautiful thoughts that they hold about Christ's mystery for free. Through them they hope to convert even the devils, while they have never yet converted a gnat. And the worst of it is, all they do is pervert the truth.²³¹⁾ That this dictum of Luther's describes the situation in the church of the present day, has already been testified to by a witness from the modern-theological camp. It is conceded that the great agreement in the "principle" according to which Christian doctrine is to be drawn not from the Bible but from pious self-consciousness has as its concomitant an "almost infinite abundance" of different trends in doctrine.²³²⁾ Modern theology has fallen so deeply below the Christian level by setting aside the principle of Scripture that it even regards "different trends" in doctrine as beauties of the Christian church and describes the agreement in doctrine and faith, which is so clearly demanded in Scripture,²³³⁾ as an abnormality and as a "repristination" of an "overcome" theological point of view.

Among the more recent Lutheran theologians of a "conservative" trend, Hofmann of Erlangen has been particularly decisive in advocating Ego theology. For this reason, he has probably been called the father of Ego theology within the Lutheran Church of the nineteenth century. Recently it was said in the Leipzig "Theologischen Literaturblatt", "that Hofmann and even more so Frank consciously and fundamentally advocated the full self-certainty of Christianity and its theology in itself".²³⁴⁾ Hofmann, in fact, instructs the theologian that in presenting Christian doctrine, he should at first completely disregard not only what the Church has taught, but also what is stated in Holy Scripture about Christian doctrine,

231) St. L. XIV, 397. Erl. 63, 371.

232) Nitzsch-Stephan, Lehrb. d. ev. Dogmatik 3, p. 16, and Introduction, p. IX.

233) Scripture calls for 1 Cor. 1:10 ἀντό λέγειν . . . , ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ νοῖ καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ γνώμῃ Eph. 4:5 τῆ μία πίστις, 2 Tim. 1:13 νηγαίνοντες λόγῳ. The expression "sound doctrine" (Luther: "wholesome teaching"), ἡ διδασκαλία ἡ νηγαία-νοῖα, Tit. 1:9; 1 Tim. 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13; 4:3; 1 Tim. 1:10, is "pure doctrine" in the sense that the doctrine to be presented in the church must be God's own doctrine, without admixture of human thoughts, as the expression 1 Tim. 6:3 is declared by the apostle himself.

234) Theol. Literaturblatt, edited by Ihmels, Leipzig, Dec. 8, 1922. p. 395.

and instead cause the theological Ego to testify "in exclusive independence" about Christian doctrine. We put a passage from Hofmann's "Schriftbeweis" here. Hofmann means:²³⁵⁾ "That relationship to God [in Christ], after I have become partaker of it, has begun an independent existence in me, which, although possible only within the church believing in Scripture, does not depend on the church nor on the Scripture to which the church refers, nor does it have the actual and closest guarantee of its truth in the former or in the latter, but rests in itself and is directly certain truth, borne and guaranteed by the indwelling Spirit of God. Accordingly, the same thing, where one wants it to be brought to knowledge and statement, wants to and must remain purely itself, unmixed with that, undisturbed by that which is outside of it, that is, outside of us, where it is situated. And whether that which is outside of us stands in however close, causal relation to that which is within us, and whether it can be unquestionably recognized as the same truth: here it is necessary to carry out the one next task purely for itself, in exclusive independence. Admittedly, where things go right, Scripture and the church will offer quite the same thing that we raise in ourselves. However, that only follows after the performance of our chief task." From Hofmann's last words it is clear that Hofmann promises subsequent revision of the ego product according to Scripture, as the supreme norm. This promise has earned Hofmann the reproach of inconsistency, that is, the reproach of apostasy from the ego principle and of relapse into "biblicism" and "intellectualism." Very recently, Horst Stephan again rebukes Hofmann for adding a "proof of Scripture" on the grounds: "Thus one took away the unity of the dogmatic method; one basically came back to biblicist and confessionalist dogmatics."²³⁶⁾ And this charge of inconsistency, viewed from Hofmann's experiential-theological standpoint, is justified. Hofmann, after all, very firmly denies that the Holy Scriptures are God's infallible Word by inspiration. But if Scripture is not God's infallible Word, but in it the theologian must distinguish between truth and error, then Scripture is no longer a norm for him,

 235) Schriftbeweis 2 1. 11.
21.

236) Glaubenslehre, Gießen 1921, p.

but a *norma normata*, which is to be examined and corrected by the Ego of the theologian. In general, it stands that the functions of Scripture, according to which it is both source and norm of Christian doctrine, cannot be separated from each other. Scripture is the norm of Christian doctrine only because it is its only source. And whoever of us is in the abnormal theological condition that he thinks that for the purpose of presenting the Christian doctrine he must at first completely take his eyes off the Bible and instead look into his own Ego, will hardly afterwards open the Bible again for the purpose of using it as a correcting norm against his Ego product. Rather, by virtue of the once taken wrong trend, he will open the Bible afterwards for the purpose of drawing it to his human thoughts. Thus Hofmann did not carry out the promised subsequent revision of what he had "found" in his Ego "purely for himself, in self-contained independence", setting aside the Scriptures. On the contrary, he also defended such parts of the Ego product as the denial of the *satisfactio vicaria* even against warning friends in his "protective writings" in an almost fanatical manner, as one said at that time: with the anger of the mother lion, from whom one wants to rob her cub. It should be quite clear to every theologian that at this point we stand before an *aut – aut* [either – or] . Either we let the Scriptures be God's own Word and teach from them, as the only source and norm of theology, *doctrinam divinam*, or we deny that the Scriptures are God's infallible Word, distinguish in them between truth and error, and teach from our Ego in God's church of our own "heart's face." The divine authority we deny to Scripture we necessarily ascribe to our own human spirit. We swim in the sea of subjectivism. Human opinion is placed in the chair of doctrine in the Church. Theology is no longer theocentric but anthropocentric in orientation.

The seriousness of the modern theologians' renunciation of Scripture and thus of the *doctrina divina* is evident from the fact that they are not merely defensive (e.g., by claiming that they teach only "old truth" in a "new way"), but also go on a strong offensive. They label the drawing of Christian doctrine from Scripture with a whole series of evil names such as: Intellectualism,

Biblicism, literal theology, mechanical view of Scripture, view of Scripture as if it were a doctrinal code, a code of laws fallen from heaven, a paper pope, and so on. We encounter at this point among modern theologians pretty much the same vocabulary of invective that both the Roman and Reformed enthusiasts used against Luther and the Lutheran Church. Roman theologians also scoffed at the idea that the Christian Church should depend on "paper" and "parchment" for its doctrines.²³⁷⁾ In doing so, they had an interest in keeping the Pope's Ego as the source and norm of Christian doctrines. In the same way, the Reformed enthusiasts considered Luther's adherence to the Word of Scripture to be dead letter theology and unevangelical Christianity. They were interested in giving that "Holy Spirit", to whom a "chariot" (*vehiculum, plastrum*) was neither necessary nor decent,²³⁸⁾ free way in the church. But because God's Holy Spirit has the way to use a "chariot", namely the means of grace, the interest — consciously or unconsciously — was in fact none other than to put the allegedly directly enlightened own spirit on the ruler's throne in the Church of God. And if now the modern theologians call the drawing and standardizing of Christian doctrine from the Holy Scriptures intellectualism, literal theology, etc., and speak of the "paper pope" and make the "experience" of the theologian the source and norm of Christian doctrine in place of the Scriptures, the interest — consciously or unconsciously or semi-consciously — is none other than to establish the product of one's own mind in God's Church as the supreme authority. The divine authority which is denied to Scripture is in fact ascribed to the Ego of the theologian. We have the result Luther describes as a result of the papist discrediting of Scripture thus: "They speak such things only for the sake of leading us out of Scripture and elevating themselves to masters over us, that we should believe their dream sermons."²³⁹⁾ And against the

 237) With exceedingly foolish calling on 2 Cor. 3:3: "not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God". Francis Coster asserts in his *Enchiridion Controversiarum Praecipuarum*, c. 1, p. 43: *Christum nec ecclesiam suam a chartaceis Scripturis pendere nec membranis mysteria sua committere voluisse* [Google]. (In Quenstedt I, 90, 92.)

238) Cf. the quotations under the section "The Cause of Parties within Outer Christendom," p. 26.

239) St. L. V. 334 f.

Reformed enthusiasts who invoked their directly enlightened "spirit" against the scriptural word, Luther writes: "The reason and cause of their conceit is that one must put these words, 'This is my body,' out of one's sight and first consider things through the spirit. ... This devil walks freely without a mask and teaches us publicly not to look at the Scriptures,²⁴⁰⁾ just as the Münzer and Carlstadt also did, who also had their art from the testimony of their inwardness and were not allowed to teach the Holy Scriptures for themselves, but for others as an outward testimony of the testimony in their inwardness."

How generally the Ego theology against the Scripture Principle comes on the scene and dominates the modern-theological market is evident from the fact that not only the decidedly liberal theologians, but also those who are considered positive, speak of "intellectualism" etc., if the Christian doctrine is drawn and standardized from Scripture instead of from within the theologian. Ihmels, for example, also accuses both the first church and the church of the Reformation, and especially the dogmatists, of an intellectualistic view of Scripture, because they appealed directly to Scripture for Christian doctrine.²⁴¹⁾ Ihmels does have an apology for the first church. The "young theology" had to deal with an opposition that "was itself religiously oriented to a good part." Therefore it had been obvious to appeal to a unique supernatural revelation. What is meant is the calling on the word of the prophets and apostles as Word of God and doctrines. But this method was perverse, because it was "essentially intellectualistic". Likewise, Ihmels has an apology for "Reformation Christianity." The church of the Reformation also had to deal with an opposition that was strongly religiously oriented. The Roman Church claimed divine authority for the traditional doctrines held within it. If, on the other hand, the interest of the church of the Reformation was directed toward pure doctrine, "then this interest could seem most securely guaranteed by this doctrine being directly covered with the

240) St. L. XX, 1022 f. Cf. Zwingli's admonition "that no one be angered by the fearful requests of the words (the words of the Lord's Supper are meant); for we do not set our foundation in them. Reprinted in Luther's Works, St. L. XX, 477."

241) Central Questions 2, p. 56 ff.

authority of divine revelation". But this method of Reformation Christianity was also perverse, because it was essentially intellectualistic. Ihmels judges, "The Reformation, too, and even more so the old dogmatics, essentially stood by the intellectualistic understanding of revelation." Ihmels, too, therefore, in order to escape intellectualism, biblicism, etc., does not want to draw Christian doctrine from Scripture alone.

The question arises, how the modern theologians come to the strange opinion that the adherence to the Scripture Principle involves intellectualism, a mere intellectual Christianity, dead orthodoxy without inner warmth. The strange opinion corresponds to a strange reasoning. One thinks that the old method lacks the "psychological connection" or "mediation". Richard Rothe²⁴²⁾ takes the alleged state of affairs as follows: "It is perverse if the old dogmatics lets the (divine) revelation begin immediately with a communication of supernatural truths. It [the old dogmatics] must think of a mechanical infusion of such truths, and this necessarily bears a magical character, because it lacks the psychological connection with men." This, of course, would be an evil state of affairs. On the other hand, it must be remembered: neither does the old dogmatics have to think of a mechanical infusion of supernatural truths, nor did it think of such an infusion. Rather, ancient dogmatics conceived of "psychological mediation" exactly as the Apostle Paul did in 1 Cor. 2, namely, that in the proclamation of "the divine sermon" (in the μαρτυριον του Θεου) the Holy Spirit is present and psychologically effective, that is, that the Holy Spirit gives recognition to the divine sermon in the psyche, in the hearts of the hearers, through the effect of faith. There is no question that the old dogmatic thought of psychological mediation in this way. Quenstedt is generally recognized as a representative of the old dogmatics. But Quenstedt writes:²⁴³⁾ "The Gospel of Christ receives its testimony of truth through the testimony of the Holy Spirit, which the Holy Spirit deposits (*perhibet*) inwardly in our hearts. ... The Holy Spirit bears

242) Quoted in Ihmels, Zentralfragen, p. 60. Ihmels himself on "psychological mediation," op. cit. p. 78.

243) *Systema* 1715, I, 145.

witness that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is 'truth,' that is, absolutely true, when He works inwardly through the doctrine revealed by Him and comprehended in the Scriptures in the hearts of men, touching, drawing, and moving them so that they believe the doctrine as originating from God or as truly divine." So "psychological mediation" is perfectly all right in the old dogmatics. And — we must add — there is no other "psychological mediation" of the supernatural truths of Christianity at all, because the gospel of Christ crucified has not only not come into any man's heart,²⁴⁴⁾ but also appears to every natural man as an offence and folly.²⁴⁵⁾ All the apologetic activity that stands at our disposal is not able to change the human heart and thus to give inward recognition to the gospel of Christ. The apostle Paul also puts this point clearly into the light. ' He explicitly reports 1 Cor. 2 that he abstained from the "psychological point of contact" through reasonable speeches of human wisdom (εν πειθοῖς σοφίας λόγοις), so that the faith of the Corinthians would not stand on human wisdom, but would have its foundation in evidence of the Spirit and power. There is, therefore, a great aberration in the assertion that by directly teaching the divine doctrines from Scripture a mere understanding, "intellectualism," is produced, or that a "mechanical infusion of supernatural truths" takes place. And, by the way, what inward exaltation of Ego theology confronts us here! We may well count on general agreement when we say: If the written word of the apostles and prophets of Christ cannot gain recognition in the hearts of men or convey itself "psychologically", the word, which comes only from the "experience" of modern theologians, will do even less. As is well known, this point is also referred to in the Smalcald Articles, when it says of the enthusiasts in the strong language of Luther: "This is all the old devil and old serpent, who also made Adam and Eve enthusiasts, led from the outward Word of God to spiritism and conceit (*proprias opiniones*), and yet did it also by other outward words. Just as our enthusiasts also

244) 1 Cor. 2:9; Rom. 16:25.

245) 1 Cor. 1:23; 2:14.

condemn the outward word, and yet they themselves are not silent, but chatter and write the world full, just as if the Spirit could not come through the writing or oral word of the apostles, but through their writing and word it must come!"²⁴⁶⁾

In general, the whole terminology of the newer theologians, who want to draw the Christian doctrine from within themselves, moves in the field of self-deception and thus in the field of untruth. This can be clearly seen if we visualize the vocabulary belonging here in its main points. The theological teachers of our time have the indispensable duty to expose the self-deceptions present here to the studying youth.

A self-deception is present in the calling to the Christian "experience". There is, of course, a Christian experience. Without a personal Christian experience there is no Christianity. Every man who is a Christian has experienced and still experiences first of all his personal condemnation before God and then the trust of the heart in the forgiveness of sins, which Christ has acquired through his *satisfactio vicaria*. But this double experience is conveyed only through the proclamation or doctrines of the Word of God, first of the Law and then of the Gospel. As Christ commands to preach in his name among all nations repentance (μετάνοιαν) and forgiveness of sins (αφεσιν αμαρτιών).²⁴⁷⁾ The same commission was given in a special appearance of Christ to the apostle Paul, and according to received commission Paul preached repentance and conversion to God to Jews and heathen (μετανοεῖν καὶ επιστρέφειν ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν).²⁴⁸⁾ Now both words, the word of the law and the word of the gospel, the Christian church has until the Last Day in the written word of the apostles. And from this Word, which is God's own Word and expresses God's own judgment in regards to "sin" and "forgiveness of sins," and not from the experience of theologians, setting aside the Word of God, as Ego heology would have us do, repentance (*contritio*) and forgiveness of sins (*remissio peccatorum sive fides in Christ*) are to be taught in the Christian Church. What the "grandfather" and "father" of Ego theology in the nineteenth century, Schleiermacher and Hofmann, together with their successors, taught from within themselves about sin,

246) M. 322, 5. 6. [Trigl., 495, 5-6 


247) Luke 24:46. 47.

248) Acts 26, 20.

cannot be worked or "experienced" in any human being by *contritio* and *fides*, namely *fides in Christum crucifixum*. It is quite generally conceded that Schleiermacher, from his Reformed-pantheistic standpoint, does not know the concept of sin at all. And if Hofmann denies original sin from his consciousness of faith "independent" of Scripture,²⁴⁹⁾ he too is consequently a bad preacher of repentance. Both Schleiermacher and Hofmann deny the *satisfactio vicaria*, and thus it is obvious that, as far as the doctrine created from their Ego is concerned, they cannot let the *fides* of the crucified Savior work or "experience" it. It must be clearly recognized and held that first of all the *contritio* is not to be taught from human, especially also not from "scientifically imparted" views of sin, but from God's own doctrine of the law, which the church also possesses until the Last Day in the law written in the Scriptures, and that without addition and without dismissal.²⁵⁰⁾ This is then "the thunderbolt of God, that he may smite both manifest sinners and false saints in one heap, and let none be right, driving them all into fright and despondency.".... This is not *activa contritio*, a made repentance, but *passiva contritio*, the right heartache, suffering and feeling of death. And is to begin the right repentance, and here man must hear [namely from God's Word] such judgment: It is nothing with you all; you are public sinners or saints, you must all become and do differently than you are and do now, you are who and how great, wise, powerful and holy as you will; here is no one pious."²⁵¹⁾ And with regard to faith, which must be added to *contritio*, to *terrores conscientiae*, it must be noted that it is likewise not to be taught from human doctrines — not even from "scientifically mediated doctrines" — of the forgiveness of sins, but only from God's doctrine, that is, from God's Word, which the Church, thank God, possesses in the Gospel written in Scripture. This then is the Gospel of God, to *εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ*, to which Paul was set apart,²⁵²⁾ which he actually proclaimed²⁵³⁾ and which he would not allow to be changed by theologizing

249) [Scripture proof^o I, 562](#).

250) Matt. 5:17-19. Gal. 3:10, 12.

251) Schmalk. Art. 312, 13 [[Trigl. 479, 2-3](#) 

252) Rom. 1:1.

253) Rom. 15:16.

men, nor even by an angel from heaven..²⁵⁴⁾ When this gospel of God is proclaimed and taught in the church, then there is, as Luther says, "the comforting promise of grace through the gospel."²⁵⁵⁾ Through the word of the gospel Christian faith comes into being, in the word of the gospel it has its object, and in the word of the gospel it grasps the forgiveness of sins acquired by Christ. Luther: *Haec est fides apprehensiva Christi, pro peccatis nostris morientis et pro iustitia nostra resurgentis. Hanc fidem Paulus praedicat, quam Spiritus Sanctus ad vocem evangelii in cordibus audientium donat et servat.*²⁵⁶⁾ In short, the Christian experience of sin and grace comes about, not by any direct action of God, nor by God's action in the realm of nature and history, but merely by the revelation of God in his Word. Insofar as we, being "laymen" or "theologians," disengage ourselves from the Holy Scriptures as God's own Word addressed to us, we also disengage ourselves from the Christian "experience." One appeals to events in the realm of nature and in history, through which God intervenes powerfully in our lives. Well, such events can be added, and they are added in order to externally direct man's attention to the proclamation of the Word of Christ. But the experience of sin and grace, by which a man becomes a Christian and remains a Christian, is worked only by the doctrines of the divine Word, whether the Scriptures are expressly quoted or not. Without the preaching of the Word of Christ, darkness covers the earth and darkness covers the nations, although the nations are surrounded by "history" and also abundantly "experience" God's hand in earthquakes, wars, famine, etc. "experience."²⁵⁷⁾ Therefore, the Church of Christ had and has missionary duty among all peoples to the ends of the earth and to the end of days, no matter what and how much happens there in the field of history and in the kingdom of nature. For how shall they believe, of which they have heard nothing? Faith comes from the sermon, but the sermon comes through the Word of God.²⁵⁸⁾

254) Gal. 1:7-9.

255) Smalc. Art. on Repentance, 312, 4. [[Trigl.](#),

[481](#), [4](#) 

256) Opp. v. a. IV, 486.

257) Cf. further elaborations on this point II, 128 ff, also II, note 255; II, 536.

258) Rom. 10:14. 17.

Furthermore, it is a self-deception when modern theology substitutes "faith" or Christian "faith consciousness" for Scripture as the source of reference for Christian doctrine, as not only the left-wing but also the right-wing newer theologians do.²⁵⁹⁾ To be sure, there is a Christian consciousness of faith and also a speaking or doctrines from this consciousness. "I believe, therefore I speak," *ἐπίστευσα, διό και ἐλάλησα*.²⁶⁰⁾ But this Christian faith likewise conveys itself in Christianity only through faith in the apostles' word, as Christ Jn. 17:20 expressly declares that all believers will believe in him through the apostles' word until the Last Day. Faith that is not faith in the apostle's word, that does not have the apostle's word as its source and standard, but rather breaks away from this word, is *ex toto*, in its entirety, human imagination, as the apostle Paul expressly declares in 1 Tim. 6:3, by ascribing typhosis and ignorance to every teacher who does not remain with the sound words of Christ. Luther also says, "Faith teaches and holds the truth," but immediately adds, "For it adheres to the Scriptures, which lie and do not deceive." "Faith" and "Word of God," however, are inseparably bound together. But not in such a way that faith would be the first and doctrine the second, so that faith set doctrine, but conversely in such a way that God's Word is the first that sets and determines faith. As Luther says, "The Word of God is the first of all; faith follows it." "That which does not have its coming [origin] from Scripture is certainly from the devil himself." By this, says Luther, that theologians have departed from Scripture, "which alone is the source of all wisdom [in theology]," have become "monsters" (*portenta*) of theologians, "like Thomas, Scotus, and others."²⁶¹⁾ This sharp judgment of Luther fully applies to modern theology, insofar as it does not want to let God's Word, the Holy Scriptures, be the source of knowledge and the object of faith, but makes faith

259) Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 7: "Julius Kaftan and Herrmann hold this view most strongly; but also Ihmels strongly emphasizes that it can always only be 'aimed at a sharp conceptual fixation of what is immediately certain to faith'. (Central Questions, p. 101.)"

260) 2 Cor. 4:13; Ps. 116:10.

261) St. L. XI, 162; XIX, 34; XIX, 1080; I, 1289 f. Exeg. opp Lat. Erl. IV, 328.

its own source and its own object. Some representatives of Ego theology have advanced to the adventurous assertion that the Christian religion "does not really" have to do with doctrine at all, and that therefore the Holy Scriptures are not to be understood as "a divine religious textbook"²⁶²⁾. This notion, they say, is a papistical remnant still clinging to the dogmatists. And to Luther, too. Also in Meusel's "Kirchliches Handlexikon" this modern contrast between doctrine and Christian religion, which is both contrary to Scripture and unreasonable, has been taken up, when it says there: "Within the New Testament, also with the apostle Paul, it is first of all not about doctrine, but about revelation and religion. What Grau (in Zöckler, *Handbuch der Theologischen Wissenschaft*, 1, 561) remarks for Paulinism, that the content of the same is religion and life, not doctrinal concept or doctrinal system, applies to the whole New Testament."²⁶³⁾ Ihmels, too, repeatedly makes statements like this: "It must become clear how precisely the evangelical faith imposes an understanding of revelation that does not see the essential in a doctrinal communication, but in an actual outward appearance of God."²⁶⁴⁾ As if Christ's word, which we have in the word of his apostles, were not an "outward appearance" of God and a "doctrinal communication" on which alone faith, knowing the truth, is founded, as Christ expressly declares John 8: "If ye continue in My Word (λόγος), ... ye shall know the truth." In more recent times, Eduard König²⁶⁵⁾ has rightly warned against the enterprise of depriving faith of its object, namely, the doctrine present in Scripture, because this would abandon the biblical concept of "believe" and overturn the nature of the Christian religion as a positive religion. It is indeed an almost incomprehensible mental aberration to exclude from the Christian religion, even only "at first", the "doctrine" or the "doctrinal message"

262) Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 249.

263) *Kirchl. Handlexikon* IV, 209, sub "Lehrbegriff".

264) Ihmels, *Aus der Kirche* etc., 1914, p. 18. Cf. op. cit. p. 110, 137. 144 and more.

265) In the writing "Der Glaubensakt des Christen, nach Begriff und Fundament untersucht", 1891, p. 119. Also in his latest writing, "Theologie des A. T.s.", 1921, p. 313, König comes back to this point.


and to claim in all seriousness that not "doctrine" but "faith" is to be preached, with the added justification that only in this way "living Christianity arises and the dead orthodoxy", the "intellectualism", is resisted. The fact is that from the very beginning the Christian religion has entered the world as doctrine or doctrinal communication. Doctrine are already the words of the seed of the woman that shall bruise the serpent's head, Gen. 3:15. Yes, the apostle Paul assures us that the whole Old Testament is written to us for doctrine, εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν διδασκαλίαν, πρὸς διδασκαλίαν, Rom. 15:4; 2 Tim. 3:16. And when the time was fulfilled, and the Son of God appeared in the flesh, and walked here on earth, he himself exercised the teaching ministry. He taught from the ship (Luke 5:3), from the mountain (Matt 5:2), in the synagogues (Luke 4:15), He went through the land teaching (Matt 4:23). Christ also uses the forty days between the resurrection and the ascension for teaching (Acts 1:3), and before his ascension he gives his church the order to teach the nations until the last day: "Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you!" The apostles complied with this. The apostle Paul did not cease to teach publicly and specially (κατ' οἶκον) the whole counsel of God, Acts 20:20, 27. And as Paul emphasizes his own teaching, so he also commands Timothy and Titus to hold fast to the doctrine they learned from him, 2 Tim. 1:13; Tit. 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:2. A bishop is to be doctrinal, διδακτικός, (1 Tim. 3:2), and the first use of Scripture is for doctrine, πρὸς διδασκαλίαν (2 Tim. 3:16). And as the teachers in the congregations, so the congregations are to abide in the doctrine, and to keep the doctrine in exercise among themselves, Col. 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell among you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing yourselves;" and 2 Thess. 2:15: "Stand therefore, brethren, and hold fast the statutes which ye are taught, whether by our word or epistle." It is commended of the Christians at Jerusalem that they remained constant in the doctrines (διδαχή) of the apostles, Acts 2:42; and the apostle John considers abiding in the doctrine of Christ so important that he instructs that anyone who does not bring the doctrine of Christ should be denied Christian brotherhood, 2 Jn. 9-11. If now, nevertheless, modern theologians maintain that the Holy Scriptures, the written word of the apostles and prophets, are not to be regarded and treated as "doctrine"

or as a "textbook" of the Christian religion, we are in any case dealing with a conception of the Christian religion which is diametrically opposed to that of Christ and his apostles and prophets.

A self-deception is also present in the calling to the "reborn EgoI" or the new man of the theologian. There is, of course, an address and doctrines from the reborn Ego or from the new man. Yes, it is God's will that all the teachers of the Church be born-again or new men, as was stated in the section "The Closer Description of Theology Conceived as Proficiency." But it is an insult to the born-again or new man to trust him with the folly of putting Scripture out of sight, even if only "at first," and looking for some other source and standard of Christian doctrine. Where this method is followed, the old man is practicing "theology". There the revolutionary is active who overturns the foundation on which the Christian church is built, Eph. 2:20. There Nietzsche's "Übermensch" has come into theological territory. As Nietzsche places his Ego above God's moral law, "beyond good and evil," so in the theological field the modern theologian takes his position above God's Word, when he claims to have to distinguish between truth and error in Scripture and to be able to accept as truth only that which has proven itself to be truth in his ego, his "experience," etc. The new man does not do such theology. The new man in the theologian is so understanding that he recognizes the Scripture as the Word of God, subordinates himself to it unconditionally, thinks and judges only according to the "It stands written" and therefore, with Luther, lets everything drop out again that occurred to him according to the 'old man' without Scripture. The new man knows from Jn. 8:31-32 that the divine truth is only recognized by abiding in Christ's doctrine, and therefore adheres to the general rule that applies to all teachers, 1 Petr. 4:11: "If anyone speaks [namely in the Christian church], that he speak it as the Word of God." We do not deny personal Christianity to all theologians who are involved in Ego theology. There is also a "happy inconsistency" here. It also happens that one and the same theologian contradicts himself in one and the same writing, refusing on the one hand to base faith on the "doctrinal communication" of Scripture, while on the other hand actually admitting that faith without

the word of Scripture is not faith but imagination.. But if the theologian, who is a Christian, reflects on the situation, he recognizes, according to the new man, that in the calling on "faith" or "faith-consciousness" there is a self-deception, if thereby the scriptural word is set aside as the only source and norm of theology.

There is also a great self-deception in the assertion that in determining what Christian doctrine is, it does not depend on the words (one usually says: on the "letter") of Scripture as much as on its "content". This assertion belongs to the great number of ways of speaking that are thoughtlessly inherited from one generation to another. But with it we are asked to accept a logical and psychological impossibility. It stands like this: Since the content of Holy Scriptures, like the content of any other writing, is expressed only through the words of Scripture, its content is certain only because its words are certain and reliable. If we cannot rely on the words of Scripture, the content of Scripture, the doctrine of Scripture, also remains in the realm of conjecture. To take us out of the state of uncertainty, which is more bitter than death for souls eager for salvation,²⁶⁶ our Savior assures us that the Scriptures cannot be broken, and refers us expressly from His words, or, which is the same thing, to the words of His apostles. The instruction and admonition of Jn. 8 does not read: "If you abide in the content of my address", but: " If ye continue in my word" (λόγος), then ... you will know the truth. And likewise John 17:20 reads Christ's instruction not that all will believe in him through the content of the apostolic word, but through the apostolic word itself (διά λόγον μυστών). This subject will be further treated in the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, namely also in the chapter on the "*variae lectiones*" which are asserted against the reliability of the word of Scripture. It should only be recalled here that against the attempted separation of the content of Scripture from the word of Scripture, Christian experience also lodges a very decided protest. Addresses like this:

 266) Apology, p. 191 [[Trigl., 291, 31](#) Word of God, and to them death is not so bitter as it is bitter to them, where they doubt in one matter. Therefore they must seek where they can find instruction."

"It is not the words, but the content of Scripture that matters" were created behind the safe study table. Consciences struck by the law of God. Consciences struck by the law of God can only find rest by being able to stand on the unwavering foundation on which the whole Christian church is built, namely on the word of the apostles and prophets, Eph. 2, 20, which is Christ's own word, Joh. 17:20. Lessing's sigh: "Who will deliver us from the unbearable yoke of the letter!" (namely of the word of Scripture) has been fulfilled in modern theology by means of the separation of the content of Scripture from the word of Scripture. But we remember that Lessing was not concerned with truth, but with doubt, according to his much quoted saying: if God held in his right hand all truth and in his left hand the constant search for truth, although with the addition of always and forever being wrong, he (Lessing) would choose the left hand.²⁶⁷⁾ With Lessing it stood thus: "The concepts of sin and redemption do not exist for Lessing as concerning him personally, and therefore also for him a supernatural revelation (the scriptural word) is worthless."²⁶⁸⁾

A self-deception is finally also present in the calling on the "historical nature" of Christianity. Christianity, of course, has an eminently historical nature. The Scriptures testify that the eternal Son of God became man and thus entered "history". The Eternal One has become temporal. Scripture also testifies to us that this marvelous divine mystery is present at the command of the eternal God through the prophets' writings in human language²⁶⁹⁾ and thus entered into "historical" appearance. But the historical appearance of Christianity in the world also includes the fact that the "revelation of salvation" with the word of Christ, which we have in the word of his apostles, is so completely finished that all subsequent "history" cannot change it in the slightest

267) In Eduard König, *Der Glaubensakt*, p. 63. Also in *Concise Dictionary of Religious Knowledge*, by Jackson, sub "Lessing".

268) Bertheau in RE. 2 VIII, 611.

269) Rom. 16:25. 26. Of course, the same happened before the written fixation through the orally proclaimed Word of God. God accompanied his historical action for the redemption of mankind from the very beginning by his historical Word of God, so that men would not have to rely on their own views about the appearance of the Son of God in the flesh.

nor should. Richard Grützmacher says quite correctly, although he himself is not completely serious about it, "that the historical revelation of salvation is contained to us only in the Holy Scriptures which reproduce it".²⁷⁰⁾ If now newer theologians interpret and use the "historical nature" of Christianity in such a way as to do away with the Holy Scriptures as the only duel and norm of Christian doctrine, and to take the Christian doctrine from their own inwardness, we stand before a quite unhistorical attack on the real history, of Christianity. Therefore, calling on "history" involves self-deception. In reality, the tendency is for the "dogmatizing subject" in the Church of Christ to place himself in the chair of doctrine in place of Christ, who in his Word is the only teaching authority (εις ὁ διδάσκαλος) in the Church until the end of time.²⁷¹⁾

To summarize the points just discussed:

If we theological teachers do not let Scripture be God's own Word, and therefore do not use it as the only source and norm of theology, we are also not teaching God's doctrine (*doctrinam divinam*), but our own view (*proprias opinionones*). It is factually indifferent whether we call the subjective source and norm Christian experience or faith and faith consciousness or reborn Ego or historical conception of Christianity or otherwise. All paths that lead past Scripture as the only source and norm of theology lead into Ego theology, and we Christians are entitled to call out to ourselves the words of Luther already quoted: "They speak such things only so that they may lead us out of Scripture and elevate themselves to masters over us, that we should believe their dream sermons," or, as Luther formulates the expression somewhat more drastically, "that they may lead us out of Scripture, obscure the faith, lay and hatch their own eggs and become our idol."²⁷²⁾

Therefore, with respect to modern theology, it stands that it can claim to be recognized as Christian theology only after principled change of base. The principled change, however, consists in learning to "identify" Scripture and the Word of God again, that is, to accept it

270) Studien zur systematischen Theologie, 3. Heft, S. 40.

271) Matt. 23:8; 28:19-20; Jn. 8:31-32; 17:20.

272) St. L. V, 336.

as God's own infallible Word according to the process of Christ and His apostles.²⁷³⁾ From this realization, then, the only correct theological method arises of its own accord, namely, the method according to which we draw Christian doctrine neither from the Ego of other people nor from our own Ego, but fully recognize and treat the Scriptures as a "divine religious textbook" and heartily assent to the dictum: *Quod non est biblicum, non est theologicum*. Then also the ugly scoldings of "literal theology", "intellectualism", "biblicism", of the "paper pope" together with the doctrinal law fallen from heaven, etc. will disappear. These diatribes are replaced by the realization and confession that the doctrine created from the Scriptures, because it is God's own doctrine, *doctrina divina*, will also certainly be able to gain inner recognition and thus, instead of "dead orthodoxy", convey living, "life-warming" Christianity. Likewise, the mockery of "pure doctrines", which appears in several forms, falls silent. The derision is replaced by the recognition that pure doctrine (ὕγιαίνονσα διδασκαλία) is the only kind of doctrine that is decent to a Christian teacher according to divine order.²⁷⁴⁾ This realization primarily creates three virtues in the theologian: 1. He will despair of all his own wisdom and approach the Scriptures in the humble spirit expressed by the words, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." (1 Sam. 3:9) 2. Because Scripture is the only textbook of Christian doctrine even for the theologian, he will assimilate and faithfully reproduce the divine doctrine revealed in Scripture by faith as the only *medium cognoscendi*. He will ask God to keep him from mixing the straw of his own ideas into the wheat of divine thoughts (Jer. 23:28). 3. By God's grace he will gain courage and joy to claim sole authority for the doctrine drawn from the Scriptures, because it is God's doctrine, and thus to resist in his part indifferentism and thus chaos in doctrine. As for the last point, courage and joyfulness, Theodor Kaftan²⁷⁵⁾ occasionally told the people whom he still assigned to the "old theological" camp

273) Jn. 10:35; Matt. 4:4, 7, 10; Luke 24:25, 44-46; Jn. 17:12; Matt. 26:54; Rom. 16:25-26; 2 Tim. 3:15-16; 2 Thess. 2:15.

274) 2 Tim. 1:13: νποτύπων εχε νγιαίνόντων λόγων, ών παρ' εμον ηκονσας; Tit. 1:9: δυνατός ... παρακαλείν εν τη διδασκαλία τη υγιαίνουσα.

275) *Moderne Theologie des Alten Glaubens*, 1906, p. 120 f.

with "a lack of joyfulness and strength". He states. "Viewed as a whole, a certain despondency spreads in many cases in the old-theological camp, a feeling of weakness, i.e. "we cannot." If this is really the case, then to the despondent people in the old-theological camp, the conviction that Scripture is God's own infallible Word by inspiration has taken a back seat under the printing of the spirit of the age. But as soon as they reflect on what their faith and the faith of all Christianity on earth is based on, Eph. 2:20, and what they inevitably need in the challenge from within and without, they will again, according to the instruction of Christ and His apostles, joyfully speak the γέγραπται, "It is written!" and repeat Luther's word: "The word they shall let stand!" not merely outwardly, but from the bottom of their hearts. They will then also know how to correctly protect and classify the "greater joyfulness" that Theodor Kaftan perceives in himself and other modern theologians, namely as the typhosis described in 1 Tim. 6:3, which is exemplified in its historical appearance by the pope and the enthusiasts of all times. *Omnis fiducia vana est, quae non nititur Verbo Dei,* ²⁷⁶⁾ *unb: Deus solo suo Verbo voluit suam voluntatem, sua consilia deformari nobis, non nostris conceptibus et imaginationibus.* ²⁷⁷⁾

11. Divisions of theology, conceived as doctrines. ^

Under this section we deal with the chapters: 1. Law and Gospel. 2. Fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines. 3. Open questions and theological problems.

1. Law and Gospel. ^

Frank has pointed out that one doctrine treated very carefully by Luther and the ancient theologians has pretty much disappeared from modern theology and is downright dismissed.²⁷⁸⁾ This is the doctrine of Law and Gospel and specifically of the difference between Law and Gospel. " Ritschl has stated in the most definite way that the traditional distinction between law and gospel with all its consequences

276) Luther on Is. 7:9; Erl., Dat. [XXII, 83](#); [St. L. VI, 70](#).

277) Luther on Deut. 4:12. *Erl., Lat.*, XIII, 137. [St. L. III, 1417](#).

278) [Dogmatische Studien. Erlangen and Leipzig, 1892, pp. 104-135.](#)

is incorrect." ²⁷⁹⁾ Recently we read again: "To treat under the title 'Wort of God' the division into Law and Gospel and the relationship of both, as the old dogmatics did, there is no reason to do so." ²⁸⁰⁾ Frank is right is saying: "It is characteristic of the state of things at the present time that this matter of Evangelical doctrine is also found to be unsuitable and contrary to right Evangelical knowledge." ²⁸¹⁾ This is indeed "characteristic" of the state of things in the present. But at the same time, it is also very self understood, because a necessary consequence of the denial of the *satisfactio Christi vicaria* which has become general. For the factual situation is this: If God has not, by placing Christ in the place of man under the duty and penalty of the law given to man, completely reconciled all mankind to Himself, the necessary consequence is that man must still somehow, by his own action and by his own goodness, reconcile God, or supplement the reconciliation which has taken place through Christ. And modern theology also teaches this very abundantly. Even theologians who belong to the positive trend let the reconciliation made by Christ be supplemented by human sanctification. One of them says: "We are directed to include the transformation of mankind in the concept of the work of reconciliation." ²⁸²⁾ This then removes the distinction between law and gospel. "Things are," as Frank puts it, "stirred together into a porridge." ²⁸³⁾

According to the Scriptures, it is extremely important that we do not "mix the Law and the Gospel into one porridge", but that we sharply distinguish between them. As is well known, the Scriptures deal with the important subject of how a sinful man can obtain forgiveness of his sins and salvation. At the same time, it says in a very certain way that this can only be done in one way, namely in such a way that the law is completely eliminated and only the gospel comes into effect. God's method of forgiveness of sins and bestowal of salvation is "without law",

 279) Frank, op. cit., p. 124.

280) Horst Stephan, Glaubenslehre, 1921, p. 183.

281) op. cit., p. 104.

282) Kim, RE.³ XX, 574. Likewise Ev. Dogmatik 3, p. 118. Cf. the section "Closer Description of Modern Theories of Reconciliation" II, 429 ff.

283) op. cit., p. 124.

"without works of the law" — "through faith in Jesus Christ", "through the gospel" (χωρίς νόμου, χωρίς έργων νόμον — διά πίστεως, πίστει, διά τον ευαγγελίου).²⁸⁴⁾ All who, for the attainment of grace and salvation, do not want to cut off the law, remain under the curse of the law, because the law pronounces the curse on every man who has not remained in all that is written in the book of the law, that he should do it.²⁸⁵⁾ Therefore, Luther rightly says that every Christian must understand the art of distinguishing between the law and the gospel. "Where this matters is lacking, a Christian cannot be recognized before a heathen or a Jew."²⁸⁶⁾ A man is a Christian and remains a Christian only by comforting himself in his conscience against the accusations of the law with the gospel, which promises him the forgiveness of his sins "without law." Also, sanctification and works are possible only among men who are not under the law but under grace.²⁸⁷⁾ All this is explained in detail following the doctrine of the means of grace under the section "Law and Gospel".²⁸⁸⁾ Here, where it is a question of the "classification" of the teachings of Scripture and the characterization of the right "theology" and of a right "theologian", the following brief outline may find place.

The Word of God in Scripture is divided into two parts: the Law and the Gospel.²⁸⁹⁾ The theologian must teach both unabridged and unchanged. He must neither reveal anything of the law nor make any change to the gospel. Concerning the Law it is said, "Till heaven and earth pass away, not the least letter nor tittle of the Law (ὥτα εν η μία κεραία) shall pass away, with the added warning, "Whosoever shall dissolve one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven."²⁹⁰⁾ And concerning the gospel, the apostle Paul pronounces a curse on anyone who teaches a different doctrine than the one he himself taught.²⁹¹⁾


284) Rom. 3:21, 28; Gal. 2:16; Rom. 3:22; 1 Cor. 15:2; Eph. 2:8.

285) Gal. 3:10.

286) [St. L. IX, 798.](#)

287) Rom. 6:14.

288) [III, 259 ff.](#)

289) In all of Scripture God's law is taught (Matt. 22:37-40); likewise in all of Scripture God's gospel is taught (Rom. 1:1, 2; 3:21; Acts 10:43). Hence The Apology (M., 87, 5 [[Trigl. 121, 5.](#) ]): *Universa Scriptura in hos duos locos praecipuos distribui debet: in legem et promissiones. Alias enim legem tradit, alias tradit promissionem de Christo.*

290) Matt. 5:17-19.

291) Gal. 1:7-9.

Now the law and the gospel are, according to their content, complete opposites, "*plus quam contradictoria*".²⁹²⁾ How so? The law curses the man who has not kept it perfectly.²⁹³⁾ According to the gospel, God does not impute the transgression of the law to man.²⁹⁴⁾ What should the theologian do in this situation? He must know how to separate the law from the gospel so that he does not remain in confusion himself and cause confusion in others. The right distinction consists in limiting both to the certain areas determined by Scripture, in which they are valid according to God's will and order.

1. From the law the theologian is to teach the knowledge of sin, διὰ γὰρ νόμον ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας²⁹⁵⁾ forgiveness of sins, on the other hand, or justification only from the gospel, λογιζόμεθα ὅτι πίστει δικαιωνοῦνται ἄνθρωποι χωρὶς ἔργων νόμου.²⁹⁶⁾ He who teaches the forgiveness of sins even from the Law is not a Christian theologian, but a deceiver who teaches apostasy from Christianity, κατηγορήθητε ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ οἵτινες ἐν νόμῳ δικαιούσθε, τῆς χάριτος ἐξεπέσατε.²⁹⁷⁾ He belongs to the class of teachers in regard to whom the apostle expresses the wish because of their harmfulness: Ὁφελον καὶ ἀποκόψονται οἱ ἀναστατοῦντες νῆμας.²⁹⁸⁾ Related to this is the divorce of law and gospel according to the nature of persons. The law is to be held against men who are still proud and secure, that is, not guilty of the wrath of God and eternal damnation. What the law says, the apostle instructs us, it says to those who are under the law, ἵνα παν στόμα φραγὴ καὶ νπόδικος γένηται πᾶς ὁ κόσμος τῷ θεῷ.²⁹⁹⁾ The gospel, on the other hand, is to be presented to those who have hearts humbled and bruised by the law, πτωχοὶ εὐαγγελίζονται,³⁰⁰⁾ εὐαγγελίζεσθαι πτωχοῖς.³⁰¹⁾

292) Luther on the Epistle to the Galatians. Ed. Erl. II, 105; [St. L. IX, 447](#).

293) Gal. 3:10; Rom. 3:9-19; also 2 Cor. 3:9: ἡ διακονία τῆς κατακρίσεως.

294) 2 Cor. 5:19: μη λογιζόμενος ἀντοῖς τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν. Acts 20:24: τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς χάριτος τοῦ θεοῦ. Also 2 Cor. 2:9: ἡ διακονία

τῆς δικαιοσύνης.

295) Rom. 3:20.

296) Rom. 3:28.

297) Gal. 5:4.

298) Gal. 5:12.

299) Rom. 3:19.

300) Matt. 11:5.

301) Luke 4:18.

2) With regard to good works, the theologian should teach from the doctrine what are good works, that is, works pleasing to God, commanded by God, as Christ answers the question about good works from the law.³⁰²⁾ This is still necessary even with Christians, inasmuch as they have the *παλαιός άνθρωπος* about them and consider food and drink commandments, celibacy, etc., to be works commanded by God.³⁰³⁾ But as to doing works commanded by God, the theologian must know and keep always present that he can bring about the desire and power to do such works, which are good in the sight of God, only through the gospel. This is the apostle's practice: "I exhort you, brethren, by the mercies of God, *διὰ τῶν οὐκτιμῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ*, that ye present your bodies a sacrifice, living, holy, and acceptable unto God."³⁰⁴⁾ Axiom: *Lex praescribit, evangelium inscribit*.³⁰⁵⁾ Luther says in reference to the theological art of bringing about good works: "A scribe urges with threats and punishments; a preacher of grace entices and provokes with demonstrated divine goodness and mercy."³⁰⁶⁾

3) Also, as far as the fight against sin is concerned, the theologian must know that through the doctrine of the Law, at best, he outwardly resists sin, but inwardly mobilizes and increases sin. Paul reports from experience: *Ὅτε ἡμεν ἐν τῇ σαρκί* [that is, *ὑπὸ τὸν νόμον, τὰ παθήματα τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν τὰ διὰ τὸν νόμον ἰνηργεῖτο ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ἡμῶν εἰς τὸ καρποφορηοῦν τῇ βανατῷ*].³⁰⁷⁾ It is only through the gospel that sin is put to death in man: *Κατηργήϋμεν ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου, ἀποθανόντες ἐν φ κατειχόμεδα, ὥστε δονλενεῖν ἡμᾶς ἐν καὶνότητι πνεύματος*.³⁰⁸⁾ Likewise Rom. 6:14: "Sin shall not be able to have dominion over you, because ye are not under the law, but under grace." Axiom: *Lex necat peccatorem, non peccatum; evangelium necat peccatum, non peccatorem*. "Therefore, whoever is well able in this art of separating the Law from the Gospel, set him on high and call him a Doctor of Holy Scriptures."³⁰⁹⁾

302) Matt. 15:1 ff; 22:35 ff; 19:16 ff.

303) Col. 2:16-23; 1 Tim. 4:1 ff.

304) Rom. 12:1.

305) Jer. 31:31-34.

306) [St. L. XII, 318](#).

307) Rom. 7:5.

308) Rom. 7:6.

309) Luther, [St. L. IX, 802](#).

2. Fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines. [^]

Obviously, the distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines cannot have the purpose of dispensing with the acceptance of certain doctrines that stand in Scripture. This is allowed for no man and is expressly forbidden in Scripture. This is true both of the distinction between fundamental and nonfundamental doctrines and of the further distinction between primary and secondary fundamentals. Christ's commission to His Church is to this effect: "Teach them to keep all that I have commanded you, διδάσκοντες ἀντοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετείλαμην ὑμῖν."³¹⁰ Likewise, in the Old Testament, men were forbidden to add to or subtract from the written word.³¹¹ Thus it is also said at the same time that nothing in Scripture is to be declared superfluous or useless; for ὅσα προεγράφη, εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν διδασκαλίαν ἐγράφη.³¹² Nevertheless, the distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines is justified according to Scripture. Also, this distinction has great practical value, as will be seen from this whole exposition.

In what sense the distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines is scripturally and practically important is recognized when we juxtapose, for example, the doctrines of Christ and of the anti-Christ. Both doctrines stand in Scripture. However, they stand in a completely different relationship to the origin of the saving faith. The doctrine of Christ forms the foundation of this faith, because saving faith has as its object Christ in His vicarious satisfaction, or is faith in Christ, Gal. 3:26: "Ye are all the children of God διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν ἰησοῦ." The doctrine of the Antichrist, on the other hand, does not stand in this fundamental relationship to the Christian faith. Scripture does not say that a man obtains forgiveness of sins and salvation through the knowledge of the Antichrist, as it consistently says of the knowledge of Christ or of faith in Christ both in the Old and New Testaments. That nevertheless the teaching of the Antichrist is not in vain in the Scriptures, but serves the saving faith insofar as it warns of dangers threatening the

310) Matt. 28:20. Accordingly, Paul Acts 20:27.

311) Jos. 1:8; Deut. 17:19.

312) Rom. 15:4 and 2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Cor. 10:11; Rom. 4:23-24.

Christian faith through the seduction of the Antichrist, is obvious and will be explained in more detail later. Here it should only be recalled that even the old Lutheran teachers did not make the doctrine of the anti-Christ a "fundamental article," as was probably ascribed to them. Rather, they expressly declared that before and even after the revelation of the Antichrist by the Reformation, there were and are many Christians who did not recognize the Antichrist in the papacy.

If we want to define here the term "fundamental doctrines" in distinction from non-fundamental doctrines, it is a question of which doctrines the Scriptures give as foundation to the Christian faith. What are these doctrines?

It is well known that especially in our time, in the interest of doctrinal freedom, it is claimed that the term "fundamental doctrines" cannot be clearly defined, as experience sufficiently proves. Thus, for example, the theologian Hofmann from Erlangen thinks that "about the difference between fundamental and non-fundamental there has been a fruitless dispute until this day".³¹³⁾ On the other hand, we can remain uncertain about the *articuli fundamentales* only as long as we do not hold on to the scriptural concept of the object of saving faith. The saving faith which Scripture teaches is faith in the forgiveness of sins for the sake of Christ's *satisfactio vicaria*; in other words, faith in divine justification without works of the law, by faith. Only he who believes this forgiveness of sins or justification through the action of the Holy Spirit is faithful in Christ in the sense of the Scriptures.³¹⁴⁾ and a member of the Christian Church.³¹⁵⁾ Whoever does not believe this doctrine is, according to the very certain statement of Scripture, outside the number of believers or outside the Christian church.³¹⁶⁾ This is where Luther's words belong: *Hic locus [iustificationis] caput et angularis lapis est, qui solus ecclesiam gignit, nutrit, aedificat, servat, defendit; ac sine eo ecclesia Dei non potest una hora subsistere.*³¹⁷⁾ Furthermore: *Quotquot sunt in mundo, qui eam*

313) [Schriftbeweis² I, 9, 10.](#)

314) Gal. 2:16: "Knowing (εἰδότες) that by works of the law a man is not justified, but by faith in Jesus Christ, we also believe in Jesus Christ."

315) Acts 5:14: Προσείθοντο [to the congregation] πατεροντες τῷ κυρίῳ.

316) Gal. 3:6-10.

317) Opp. v. a. VII, 512; [St. L. XIV, 168.](#)

[namely *doctrinam iustificationis*] *non tenent, snnt vel Indaei vel Turcae vel Papistae vel haeretici.*³¹⁸⁾ The dogmatists call the doctrine of justification *articulum omnium fundamentalissimum.*³¹⁹⁾

The Scriptures, however, instruct us very emphatically, and in detail on individual doctrines, as to what doctrines faith in the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake presupposes and includes.

1. Scripture teaches very clearly that saving faith presupposes the knowledge of sin and the consequence of sin, eternal damnation. Where this knowledge of sin, that is, the knowledge of one's own worthiness for damnation, is not present, but there is still trust in one's own worthiness, there can be no faith in the divine forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake. Therefore, according to the teaching method prescribed by Christ, repentance first and then forgiveness of sins should be preached among all peoples.³²⁰⁾ Christ also illustrates this by the example of the Pharisee and tax collector. Christ very decisively rejects the faith of the Pharisee, who was not guilty of God's wrath and condemnation, but thanked God that he was not like other people, that is, considered himself better before God than robbers, the unjust, adulterers, or even like that tax collector.³²¹⁾ This is where all the scriptural statements about "broken hearts" belong, where God comes in and dwells with His grace.³²²⁾

2. The Scriptures further teach very definitely that saving faith includes in itself the knowledge of the person of Christ, namely, the belief that Christ is θεάνθρωπος, God and man. The question of Christ Matt. 22:42: "How think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?" has not merely "intellectual" but a very practical value. That without faith in the essential deity of Christ there is no faith in Christ is said by Christ Himself. He rejects the faith of the Jewish publicans, who thought he was John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah or the prophets, and confirms the faith of his disciples, who had recognized him as the Son of the living God through the Father's

318) Ad Gal. Erl. 1, 20; St. L. IX, 29.

319) The quotations in Baier-Walther III, 245 sq.

320) Luke 24:47. 321) Luke 18:9-14.

322) Is. 66:2; 57:15; Ps. 34:19; 51:19; Luke 4:18.

revelation.³²³⁾ Where one wants to call Christ God *honoris causa* at best, but does not want to let him be the eternal true God, there can be no saving faith. The Unitarians and the modern theologians who walk on Unitarian paths have their location *extra ecclesiam* according to the Scriptures.³²⁴⁾ As for the Trinity, or the knowledge that the unus Deus is Father, Son, Holy Spirit, according to Scripture, faith in the three persons is intertwined in such a way that there is no knowledge of the Son without the Father³²⁵⁾ and no knowledge of the Father without the Son,³²⁶⁾ and no one can call the Father Father and call the Son a Lord without the Holy Spirit.³²⁷⁾ — It has been objected that we could not trust the first Christians with a "reflection" on the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. One has gone so far as to want to prove "the non-historicity of the Matthean command to baptize" (baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit) also from this assumed ignorance of the first Christians. With this alone, modern theology blames its own deficit in Christian knowledge quite unhistorically on the first Christians.³²⁸⁾ About the revelation of the Trinity also in the Old Testament follows a special section at the doctrine of God (*De Deo*).

3) The *fides salvifica* also includes the knowledge of the work of Christ. According to Scripture, Christ is the object of *fides salvifica*, not in so far as he is teacher of the divine law, nor in so far as he is perfect model of virtue, but in so far as he is the mediator between God and men, who gave himself for all for redemption (ἀντίλυτρον), or in so far as he is God's Lamb who bears the sin of the world.³²⁹⁾ Whoever does not believe Christ's *satisfactio vicaria* does not believe in Christ in the sense of Scripture, but rather — *tertium non datur* — somehow bases his reconciliation with God on his own doing or his own worthiness, and separates himself *eo ipso* from the grace acquired by Christ, as Scripture

323) Matt. 16:13-17; — 1 John 1:1-4.

324) 1 John 5:12-13, Apol. p. 77.

325) Matt. 16:17; 11:27a. 326) Matt. 11:27b.

327) Rom. 8:15; 1 Cor. 12:3; Jn. 16:13-15.



328) This point is treated in more detail in the doctrine of baptism, III, 297 ff.

329) 1 Tim. 2:5. 6; Jn. 1:29.

explicitly teaches doctrines.³³⁰⁾ That within such fellowships, which forbid the forgiveness of sins for the sake of Christ's perfect merit as the foundation of the saving faith (Rome), believing children of God are nevertheless found, is due to the fact that these, against the church's prohibition, place their trust before God only in Christ crucified for their sins. The Apology therefore takes as its starting point the fact that the Roman Church errs in the foundation of the Christian faith:³³¹⁾ "Many of the articles of our adversaries destroy the right foundation, the knowledge of Christ and faith. For they reject and condemn the high, greatest article, since we say that we obtain forgiveness of sins through Christ by faith alone, without any works. On the other hand, they teach to trust in our works to earn forgiveness of sins, and instead of Christ they substitute their works, orders, mass, just as the Jews, heathens and Turks with their own works plan to be saved. Item, they doctrines, the sacraments make pious *ex opere operato*, without faith. Whoever does not consider faith necessary has already lost Christ. Item, they direct saint service, call them out instead of Christ as mediator." On the other hand, the same Apology remarks: *Mansit tamen apud aliquos pios semper cognitio Christi*.³³²⁾

4 Scripture also teaches that saving faith is always faith in the word of Christ. What is meant is the external word of the gospel, which Christ commanded his church to preach and teach.³³³⁾ This word is both the object of faith, πιστεύετε ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ,³³⁴⁾ and the means whereby faith comes into being, ἡ πίστις ἐξ ἀκοῆς.³³⁵⁾ Scripture rejects faith that does not have Christ's word, present in the word of His apostles (John 17:20), as its object and is not wrought by that word. It describes such faith as a conceit and a non-knowledge and as a human workmanship (πίστις ... ἐν σοφίᾳ ἀνθρώπων).³³⁶⁾ Luther calls the faith that is not based on the external word a faith "in the air"?³³⁷⁾ That

330) Gal. 5:4: κατηγορήθητε ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ... τῆς χάριτος ἐξεπέσατε.

331) M. 156, 22. [Trigl. 233, 21 ] 332) M. 151, 271. [Trigl. 225, 271 ]]

333) Mark. 16:15-16; Rom. 1:1-2 334) Mark. 1:15.

335) Rom. 10:17. 336) 1 Tim. 6:3; 1 Cor. 2:1-5.

337) Cf. the detailed exposition II, 535, under the section "The saving faith is faith in the grace offered in the word of the Gospel". When ancient dogmatists distinguished between the *fundamentum*

within the church fellowships that officially reject the external Word of Christ as the medium of forgiveness of sins, there are nevertheless faithful children of God, comes from the fact that there are always a number of souls who, in contradiction with the official doctrine, base their faith on the external Word.³³⁸⁾

The Scriptures deny the Christian faith to all who deny the bodily resurrection of the dead and eternal life. As is well known, recently also leaders of the *Interchurch World Movement* wanted to persuade church and world that it is enough to believe in Christ in this life; the *hereafter*, the resurrection including heaven and hell, can be left alone.³³⁹⁾ So essentially also the liberal Protestant theology, which carries out the detachment of the Christian doctrine from the Holy Scriptures more consistently than the "*positive*" trend. Horst Stephan says of the belief in the resurrection: "It is filled with an interest in the human body and its transfigured entrance into eternity, which has no absolutely necessary connection with the Christian faith, but sometimes appears rather as an after-effect of the Jewish belief in retribution."³⁴⁰⁾ The Holy Scriptures say of those who, like Hymenaeus, Alexander, and Philetus, rejected the future bodily resurrection of the dead and wished to "spiritualize" it (λέγοντες την ανάστασιν ἤδη γεγονέναι), that they were shipwrecked in the faith and lacked the truth περί την πίστιν ενανάγησαν — περί την αλήθειαν ἡσυχόησαν).³⁴¹⁾ And as to their relation to the Christian church, the apostle denies them membership in the church, saying, Ὅνς παρέδωκα τῷ σατανᾷ, that they may be chastened and blaspheme

substantiale (Christ) and the *fundamentum organicum* (the word of the gospel of Christ), they do not teach a double foundation of faith. Hollaz (*Examen, Proleg.*, a. 2, qu. 19) explicitly points out that Christ, the *fundamentum substantiale*, becomes the foundation of faith through the word of Christ, the *fundamentum substantiale*. The newer theologians are different. Because they reject the word of Christ's apostles and prophets as the word of God, they want to base faith on "Christ's person," on "the living Christ," etc., leaving aside the word of Scripture. But whoever believes past Christ's word, believes *eo ipso* also past the "living Christ".

338) The more detailed exposition II, 535 ff. On the "happy inconsistency" in the Reformed fellowships III, 188 ff.

339) The evidence in *L. u. W.* 67, 1 ff. 340) *Glaubenslehre*, 1921, p. 119.

341) 1 Tim. 1:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:17-18.

no more.³⁴²⁾ And when some of the Corinthians said that "the resurrection of the dead is nothing",³⁴³⁾ the apostle instructs them that they do not know anything about God³⁴⁴⁾ and deny the whole Christian religion, which includes the belief in the resurrection of the dead.³⁴⁵⁾

When we thus speak of "fundamental doctrines", which faith in the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake necessarily presupposes in part and includes in part, it is self-evident that the church-dogmatic formulation of these doctrines is not meant. The ancient dogmatists also amply reminded us of this;³⁴⁶⁾ likewise Luther, when he explains in detail that the councils with their ecclesiastical *terminis* "did not establish anything new in the faith," but only "preserved through Holy Scriptures" the old faith that Christians hold before all councils. Luther also refers this to the Nicene Creed. Christians have always believed the coessential deity of Christ before the terminus ὁμοούσιος came into reception towards Arius.³⁴⁷⁾

Primary and Secondary Fundamental Teachings. ^

This further division of the fundamental doctrines need not frighten anyone either. It is not an invention of orthodox dogmatics, but factually justified and practically important. For example, in the disputes between the Lutheran and Reformed churches, it has also been negotiated whether baptism and the Lord's Supper belong to the foundation of the Christian faith.³⁴⁸⁾ The Scriptures decide this question. On the basis of Scripture, we must say that besides the word of the gospel, both

342) Huther on the words οὐς παρεδωκα τῷ σατανά: "The same excommunication of which the apostle speaks 1 Cor. 5:5."

343) 1 Cor. 15:12: ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἐστίν.

344) 1 Cor. 15:34: ἀγνοοῦσιν θεὸν τινες ἐχονσιν. Christ judges the same of the Sadducees Matt. 22:29: "Ye err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God."

345) The entire 15th chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians belongs here. The detailed exposition of the scriptural doctrine of the resurrection of the dead III, 600 ff.

346) Baier-Walther I, 61, note e.

347) "Von Konziliis u. Kirchen," St. L. XVI, 2233, 2214.


348) Cf. on the literature II, note 647. Apart from Nikolaus Hunnius' *Διάσκεψις Theologica de Fundamentali Dissensu* (1626), Jn. Hülsemann's *Calvinismus Irreconciliabilis* (1646) belongs primarily here. The entire literature also from the Reformed side in Walch, *Bibliotheca Theologica* II, 486 ff.

sacraments are also given as a foundation to faith in the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake. Baptism takes place εις Ἀφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν,³⁴⁹⁾ and in the Lord's Supper the body and blood of Christ are presented as υπέρ υμῶν διδόμενον and υπέρ υμῶν ἐκχυνόμενον εἰς ἀφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν.³⁵⁰⁾ Thus, if in both sacraments there is a promise or presentation of the forgiveness of sins, faith is also to be based on these sacraments,³⁵¹⁾ and Baptism and the Lord's Supper are therefore rightly reckoned among the fundamental doctrines. However, a person can err in the knowledge of Baptism and the Lord's Supper out of weakness and still stand in faith in the forgiveness of sins, if he keeps to the word of the gospel he has heard or read. The reason is that the word of the gospel offers the whole forgiveness of sins acquired from Christ, and baptism and the Lord's Supper offer the same grace only in a different and especially comforting form (*verbum visibile* — *applicatio individualis*). It therefore stands thus: Whoever does not recognize and need baptism and the Lord's Supper as means of grace has less support for his faith in God, who is gracious for Christ's sake, than God has intended for him. Nevertheless, if he believes the word of the gospel, he has through this faith the entire forgiveness of sins and thus also salvation. So it stands with all God's children in the Reformed church fellowships who, under the guidance of their dead and living teachers, do not recognize and use Baptism and the Lord's Supper as God-ordained means of justification because of weakness in knowledge. Both Luther³⁵²⁾ and the Preface to the Book of Concord³⁵³⁾ draw attention to this. Such doctrines as Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which by their nature should also form the basis of faith in the forgiveness of sins, but which are not necessarily required for this faith, because it already has the necessary support elsewhere (through the word of the gospel), have not inappropriately been called *articuli fundamentales secundarii*. Thus Quenstedt also counts the doctrine of the sacraments among the articles, *quī non simpliciter fundamentales seu causa salutis sunt, ad fundamentum tamen pertinent*.³⁵⁴⁾

349) Acts 2:38.

350) Luke 22:19 ff.; Matt. 26:26 ff.

351) The detailed exposition in the doctrine of baptism under the section "The Grace-Medium Character of Baptism (*Baptismal Grace*)" III 308 ff.

352) [St. L. XVII, 2212](#). 353) M., p. 17 ff. [[Trigl. 19 ff.](#) 

354) *Systema* I, 355.

It follows from this that restraint is in order when it comes to judging the personal state of faith of individuals who deny secondary fundamental articles. On the one hand, of course, it must be said: Whoever denies secondary fundamental articles consequently also overturns the primary ones because of the close connection that exists between them. We can also illustrate this with the doctrines of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Whoever denies that God can give forgiveness of sins through baptism and the Lord's Supper because baptism and the Lord's Supper are only external means, must consequently also deny the forgiveness of sins through the Word of the Gospel because the Gospel is equally an external means. Another example: He who denies the communication of attributes (*communicatio idiomatum*) in Christ on the basis of the axiom that the finite is incapable of the infinite (*Finitum non est capax infiniti*), consequently denies also the communication of the divine person of the Son of God to human nature, that is, he denies the incarnation (*incarnatio*) of the Son of God. But experience teaches that there is a "happy inconsistency" here, primarily among the so-called laity, but also among teachers and learned theologians. As we have to remind repeatedly, logic is in a bad way with us men after the Fall, and this logic is moreover worsened in the dispute by excited passions. Luther's relatively mild judgment of Nestorius is based on this. Luther famously says: "Although now, to speak thoroughly, it must follow from Nestorius's opinion that Christ is a pure man and two persons, yet it was not his opinion. For the coarse, unlearned man did not see that he was pretending impossible things, that he at the same time earnestly held Christ to be God and man in one person, and yet did not want to admit the *idiomata* of the natures of the same person of Christ. He wants to believe the first to be true, but that should not be true, which follows from the first. So that he indicates that he himself does not understand what he denies."³⁵⁵) Luther gives further examples of this because "such lack of understanding is not strange in the world."³⁵⁶) The Roman doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass in itself overturns the foundation of faith, *sola gratia*. But some people have not understood this consequence for themselves, for their person.

355) [St. L. XVI, 2230](#). 356) [St. L. XVI, 2238](#).

Luther wrote at the end of 1521 in his writing "On the Abuse of the Mass". At the end of the year 1521, Luther wrote in his book "On the Abuse of the Mass": "It undoubtedly still happens to many pious Christians that they keep the mass in a simple faith of their heart and think that it is a sacrifice. But because they do not rely on the sacrifice [before God], indeed, they take it for granted that everything they do is sin, and cling to the pure mercy of God alone, they are preserved so that they do not perish in this error."³⁵⁷⁾ Luther further writes in 1539 in his writing "Of the Councils and Churches": "Now there are many great lords and learned men who freely and firmly confess that our doctrine of faith, which makes justified without merit by pure grace, is right; but that one should therefore leave and despise monasticism and saintly service or the like, that strikes them upside the head, if it nevertheless enforces the consequence. For no one can become righteousness without faith; from this it follows that one cannot become righteous through monastic life." Yes, Luther "takes himself by the nose" and cites his own person as an example of inconsistency. He had already taught twenty years ago "that faith alone without works makes one justified," and yet he still held hard to monasticism and nunnery. In justification he adds, "I, thoughtless fool, could not see the consequence that I should yield, that where faith alone did it, monasticism and Mass could not."³⁵⁸⁾ Of synergism, as opposed to Erasmus' *facultas se applicandi ad gratiam*, Luther judges that it encourages man to trust in his own ability in matters of attaining salvation, thereby making Christian faith in the forgiveness of sins without works of the law impossible.³⁵⁹⁾ At the same time, Luther admits the possibility of a happy inconsistency in individual persons, namely, that while in theory, in writings and disputations, they still ascribe to man a faculty in spiritual matters, in practice, "as often as they come before God to pray to him or to act with him, they go along in utter forgetfulness of their free will, despairing of themselves and asking nothing for themselves

 357) [St. L. XIX, 1131](#). 358) [St. L. XVI, 2238](#).

359) Opp. v. a. VII, 154: *Quamdiu [homo] persuasus fuerit, sese vel tantulum posse pro salute sua, manet in fiducia sui, nec de se penitus desperat, ideo non humiliatur coram Deo, sed locum, tempus, opus aliquod sibi praesumit, vel sperat, vel optat saltem, quo tandem perveniat ad salutem...*
[\[Google\]](#)

but mere grace"?³⁶⁰) We find similar pronouncements in later Lutheran theologians. Thus Hülsemann says that not every false doctrine, which by its nature destroys the foundation of faith, has this effect also on every erring individual, because there may be precisely a "happy inconsistency."³⁶¹

This concession has been and still is much abused in the interest of indifferentism. Therefore, it must be clearly recognized and held that the "happy inconsistency", by virtue of which, through God's special preservation, an erring person does not fall out of the faith, can never give error itself a right to exist in the Christian church. Roman theologians allowed themselves this erroneous conclusion in their fight against Luther. When Luther insisted that the Roman errors were to be dismissed, it was countered that the doctrines Luther called errors had also been put forward by "saints," even by those saints whom Luther himself counted among the true children of God. This Roman way of arguing is repeated in the church as often as a calling on the fathers of the Lutheran church takes place for the purpose of securing a right in the church for aberrations of the fathers against the testimony of Scripture. Those who, in order to protect erroneous doctrines, refer to the case of pious fathers in error, are pointed out by Luther to the possibility that they may follow the pious fathers, "but they will not with them at the end."³⁶²) It is an exceedingly serious matter about teaching in God's house, the Christian church. Those who stand in this office should never forget: 1. Nowhere and no one is given license in Scripture to deviate from God's Word on any point. Rather, as house rules for the Christian church until the Last Day, "Teach them to keep all that I have commanded you!"³⁶³) 2. Any deviation from Christ's word, which the Church has in the word of His apostles, is expressly called an offence (σκάνδαλον ποιέειν).³⁶⁴) The error, which can be harmless to the first erring person through God's special preservation,

360) St. L. XVIII. 1730. Erl. Opp. V. a. VII, 166.

361) *Calvinismus Irreconciliabilis*, p. 432; quotes Baier-Walther 1, 62: *Non omne dogma, quod ex sua natura aliquod fidei necessario praesuppositum aut eam consequens astruit vel destruit, idem in hominis cuiusque mente illud efficit.* [[Google](#)]

362) St. L. XIX. 1133. 363) Matt. 28:20. 364) Rom. 16:17.

is and remains a nuisance for others, who do not discount the error in themselves, but take it as it reads, carry it on and even cause further division in the church with reference to the "Fathers". In order to dismiss as far as possible the offence that deviation from Word of God naturally causes, public teachers have felt the need to publicly recant errors that were presented earlier. This is why Augustine wrote his *Retractationes*,³⁶⁵⁾ and why Luther also asks that his early writings be read "with much mercy" because they are not yet completely free of Roman erroneous doctrines.³⁶⁶⁾ Anyone who sets aside the testimony of Scripture in one doctrine is in fact calling into question the whole principle of Christian knowledge, even if he himself is not clearly aware of it. We must not forget that all the articles of Christian doctrine have a fellowship and an indivisible principle of knowledge, namely, the word of Holy Scriptures. If, then, for reasons of "unthinkability," irrationality, or other causes inherent in our ego, we set aside the authority of Scripture in certain doctrines, e.g., in the doctrines of Baptism, of the Lord's Supper, of conversion, of the Election of Grace, of the inspiration of Scripture, etc., we consequently also set aside the authority of Scripture when it tells us of the Lamb of God who bears the sin of the world, and of the blood of Christ which makes us clean from all sin.³⁶⁷⁾ Luther looks to this when he says warningly, "The Holy Spirit [who speaks in all the doctrines of Scripture] cannot be separated nor divided, that He should make one part teach true and the other false, or make it believe."³⁶⁸⁾ To be sure, Luther also adds here, "Without where there are weak ones who are willing to be instructed and not stiff-necked to contradict." Among the weak who are ready to be instructed are all those in whose hearts still dwells faith in the

 365) In the prologue to his *Retractationes*, Augustine speaks about the motive in this way: *De tam multis disputationibus meis sine dubio multa colligi possunt, quae, si non falsa, at certe videantur, sive etiam convincantur non necessaria. Quem vero Christus fidelium suorum non terruit, ubi ait: Omne verbum otiosum quodcumque dixerit homo, reddet pro eo rationem in die iudicii.* [Google] Then he continues: *Restat igitur, ut me ipsum iudicem sub magistro uno, cuius de offensionibus meis iudicium evadere cupio.* [Google] Ed. basil. I, 1.

366) Opp. v. a. I, 15; St. L. XIV, 439; XIX, 293. 296 and often.

367) Jn. 1:29; 1 Jn. 1:7. 368) St. L. XX, 1781.

forgiveness of sins acquired from Christ. But the situation is always binding with danger even for the weak, especially when controversies arise. Luther rightly reminds us that not only secular but also spiritual wars are dangerous. Even spiritual wars are not without wounded and dead. The climax of danger occurs when in doctrinal controversies the clear word of Scripture is brought to the fore and error is held against this word of Scripture, in which the Holy Spirit is active. Then the case can arise that the "erring Christian", that is, the erring out of weakness, while faith still exists, ceases and the "unchristian erring" or the will to err sets in, which makes faith impossible.³⁶⁹⁾ This is then the case described thus, Tit. 3:10-11: "A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself," *αμαρτάνει ὃν αὐτοκατάκριτος*.³⁷⁰⁾ 4. Nor should we forget that, as every sin in the field of morals,³⁷¹⁾ so also every error in the field of doctrine has a tendency to prevail, that is, to involve other doctrines and finally to corrupt the whole doctrine. This is what the apostle means when he says Gal. 5:9 that a little leaven will leaven the whole dough.³⁷²⁾ Luther looks to this tendency of every error when he compares Christian doctrine to a ring that is no longer whole when it has only one fracture, and further says of the articles of Christian doctrine "that one article is all and all articles are one, and that when one is lost, gradually all are lost."³⁷³⁾ The church history of all times provides the evidence for this.

 369) Luther's classic dictum regarding "Christian error": "You cannot speak: I want to err Christianly. A Christian error happens out of ignorance." (St. L. XIX, 1132.)

370) The *αὐτοκατάκριτος*, which occurs only here, cannot be misunderstood at all. It denotes inward self-condemnation, *suapte iudicio condemnatus*. Word of God held up to him condemned him, and this condemnation he himself felt in his conscience. Huther z. St.: "He sins with consciousness of his guilt and condemnation."

371) 1 Cor. 5:6. Therefore 2 Cor. 7, 1 the exhortation to purification *ἀπὸ παντός μολνισμόν σαρκός και πνεύματος*.

372) Meyer, like Luther and our old theologians, also refers to Gal. 5:9 to the area of doctrines.

373) On Gal. 5:9. St. L. IX, 642 ff.

The "happy inconsistency" is followed by the "unhappy consequence". Thus, the rejection of baptism and the Lord's Supper as means of grace has led Reformed people to consistently reject even the external word of the gospel as a means of grace, to retreat to an imagined "immediate inner enlightenment," and then to fall prey to perfected rationalism. For other Reformed people, the denial of the possibility of the communication of the attributes in the person of Christ led to the denial of the incarnation of the Son of God, namely, to Socinianism.³⁷⁴⁾ Within the Lutheran Church, the vacillating position of the later Melanchthon is also due to the fact that Melanchthon thought that for the salvation of common grace he had to insert synergism (the "different behavior") into the Christian order of salvation. From this error, his clear view of Christian truth became so clouded that he collaborated on the Leipzig Interim, a document that G. Plitt characterizes as: "A real mockery, indeed a denial of the Reformation and the Evangelical Church. Deeply disgruntled, Melanchthon returned to Wittenberg." ³⁷⁵⁾

Nonfundamental doctrines. ^

"Non-fundamental" as distinguished from "fundamental" are appropriately called such scriptural doctrines as stand in Scripture but are not foundation or object of faith insofar as faith obtains forgiveness of sins and makes one a child of God. They are doctrines in which the faith of those who have already obtained forgiveness of sins or have already become children of God is active in knowledge and should also be active according to God's will. Such doctrines are, for example, the doctrines of the Antichrist and of the angels. That the doctrine of the Antichrist does not belong to the foundation of the *fides salvifica* has already been explained. The same is to be said with regard to the doctrines of the angels. The faith that takes hold of the forgiveness of sins is not faith in the angels, but only faith in Christ. Faith in Christ benefits from the correct knowledge of these non-fundamental doctrines as well, in that they warn believers of dangers, such as the doctrine of the

374) Cf. the further exposition II, 302 f., and the example of Adam Neuser.

375) RE.² VI, 777.

Antichrist, or put the goodness of God even more into the light, like the doctrines of the angels. What goodness and grace of God shines out when it says of the angels: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation"! So also in relation to the *articuli non-fundamentales* 2 Tim. 3:16: *πάσα γραφή θεόπνευτος καὶ ωφέλιμος*. But even in the denial of non-fundamental doctrines there is the danger of denying the divine authority of Scripture. Whoever does not want to believe that angels exist, even though he knows that the Scriptures teach the existence and activity of angels, denies the divine authority of the Scriptures and thus abandons the principle of knowledge of the whole Christian religion. [Baier](#) therefore says very correctly: *Interim etiam in his cavendum est, ne errorem amplectendo aut profitendo in revelationem divinam Deumque ipsum temere peccetur* [[Google](#)].³⁷⁶⁾ This, of course, is also true with respect to the historical, geographical, archaeological, etc. information of the Scriptures. These, of course, are not the object of faith, inasmuch as faith makes one partaker of the forgiveness of sins. It is a grave error of [Bellarmine](#) when he says: *Catholici tam late patere volunt obiectum fidei iustificantis, quam late patet Verbum Dei*.³⁷⁷⁾ Thus a work is made of faith. It is absolutely to be noted that the object of *fides iustificans* is only the Evangelical promise, which offers forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake.³⁷⁸⁾ But whoever does not believe the Scriptures in the small matters of historical, geographical, etc., how will he believe the Scripture in the great things, which are about the incarnation and *satisfactio vicaria* of the Son of God, and against which all the religious concepts that man naturally harbors?³⁷⁹⁾ For this reason Philippi felt impelled to [withdraw](#), in the third edition of his *Dogmatik*, the doubts which he had formerly expressed concerning the reliability of the historical, etc. statements of Scripture..³⁸⁰⁾

376) [Compendium I, 65](#).

377) *Lib. I De Iustific.*, c. 4; in Quenstedt II, 1362.

378) This is explained in detail II, 505 under the section "The saving faith has only the gospel as its object".

379) 1 Cor. 1:23; 2:14.

380) Cf. supplement to the 3rd edition of the [Doctrine of the Faith I, 279](#). Cf. [report of the Synodal Conference 1886](#), p. 35.

3. Open questions and theological problems. [^]

Open questions are not those on which men cannot agree, nor those on which there is not yet a symbolic decision, but only those questions which Holy Scriptures themselves do not answer and *eo ipso* leave open.

It is obvious that the Holy Scriptures are set aside as the source and norm of Christian doctrine, if only that is to be considered generally binding Christian doctrine on which men can agree. Thereby Christ's word: "Teach them to keep all that I have commanded you!" is converted into the instruction: "Teach them to keep what you can obtain human consent for!". This thought, which is contrary to Scripture, is the basis of the many attempts to bring about church unions without unity in Christian doctrines. We have examples of this in the "Evangelical Alliance" (since 1846), in the Reformed Church, which (Zwingli and Calvin included) has always shown a tendency to unite with the Evangelical Church without eliminating doctrinal differences. The most recent example of church merger without actual agreement on doctrine is present in this country in the United Lutheran Church ("Merger Synods").³⁸¹⁾ The same setting aside of the Scriptural principle is encountered when newer Lutherans express the strange view that only those doctrines are to be regarded and treated as binding in the Lutheran Church on which there is a decision in the symbolic books of the Lutheran Church. This is, in substance, the Roman error, which Luther rejects with the well-known words: "The Christian church has no power [i.e., not even the Lutheran church] to set some articles of faith, never has, never will."³⁸²⁾ This is what the Dorpat report of 1866 comes to.³⁸³⁾

On the other hand, it is to be noted that all such questions are to be recognized as open ones, which may well suggest themselves when thinking about the doctrines present in Scripture, but which are either not answered at all or not answered clearly in Scripture. That open

381) Cf. F. Bente, [American Lutheranism, II, p. 9](#). The same unionism and indifferentism was found in the earlier General Synod, pp. [19](#), [48](#), [170](#), the General Council, pp. [195](#), [224](#), and the United Synod in the South, pp. [232](#) ff.

382) Erl. 31, 122. opp. v. a. IV, 373; [St. L. XIX, 958](#).

383) For more on this, see the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures under the section "Scripture and Symbols".

questions are to be acknowledged in this sense is clear from all scriptural statements in which adding to God's word is forbidden.³⁸⁴⁾ Every true theologian must learn not only to address, but also to be silent. He should speak where and insofar as God's Word speaks, but also be silent where God's Word is silent, that is, gives no information. If he does not learn this art of silence, but allows himself to speak where God's Word is silent, then the word applies to him: "Thus says the Lord of hosts: Do not obey the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They deceive you, for they preach to the face of their heart, and not out of the Lord's mouth."³⁸⁵⁾ Open questions in this sense are also called "theological problems", namely problems in the sense that they cannot be solved in the Church here on earth, because the divine solution through the Holy Scriptures is missing here. This is the meaning of the old dictum that a theologian can answer many questions with a clear conscience: "I don't know", *nescio*.

The theological problems in this sense include, for example, the question of how sin could arise, since all creatures, including all angels, were originally created good.³⁸⁶⁾ Here also the question can be counted whether the soul of the child is created each time directly by God (Creatianism) or is transferred from the parents to the child, thus indirectly created by God (Traduzianism).³⁸⁷⁾ Among the unsolvable problems in this life

384) Deut. 4:2; 12:32; 1 Pet. 4:11.

385) Jer. 23:16; also 1 Tim. 6:3 ff.


386) The attempt to solve this problem has led to dualism in its various forms, also to the denial of sin. [Nitzsch-Stephan, Ev. Dogmätik 3, p. 438](#). More about this in the doctrine of God.

387) Detailed dogma-historical treatment of this question, which has been dealt with a lot namely in the Pelagian disputes and then also later, in Chemnitz, *Loci*, 1. *De Peccato Originis*, ed. 1599, I, 567 sqq. about Luther's position on this question Chemnitz says: *Lutherus in disputationibus conclusit, se publice nihil velle affirmare de ista quaestione, sed privatim apud se tenere sententiam de trāduce. Merito autem reprehendendos esse Pontificios, qui in re obscura, sine manifestis Scripturae testimoniis, temeraria auctoritate condiderunt articulum fidei ad eversionem purioris doctrinae de peccato originis*. Chemnitz expresses his own opinion in the following words: *Haec de quaestione illa volui annotare, quia usitata est et iudico sobriam eius explicationem aliquid conferre ad intelligendam causam efficientem* [namely, original sin].... *Et discamus ex hoc exemplo pie et firmiter fundata simplicitate praecedere tales quaestiones, quae non sine periculo fidei subtilius disputantur. Satis ergo sit de causa efficiente*

is also the so-called *crux theologorum*, namely, the question that arises, as the Formula of Concord reminds us, in the face of the fact: "One is hardened, blinded, given to a perverse mind; another, so well in like guilt (*in eadem culpa*), is again converted." ³⁸⁸⁾ The Formula of Concord warns against trying to answer this question in this life. It refers the answer to the eternal life,³⁸⁹⁾ The right judgment will therefore be this: All theologians who really want to close open questions in theology or really want to solve theological problems act a. contrary to Scripture, because they do not stay with 1 Petr. 4:11: Εἴ τις λαλεῖ, ὡς λόγια θεοῦ; b. unscientifically, because they pretend to a knowledge they do not possess. According to Jn. 8:31-32 all Christian knowledge of truth is imparted by abiding in Christ's word. According to 1 Tim. 6:3, what is claimed to be knowledge of truth without abiding in the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ belongs to the realm of imagination or ignorance (τετνωται, μη επιστάμενος).

scire, primos parentes lapsu suo meritos esse, ut quales ipsi erant post lapsum et corpore et anima, tales procrearentur omnes posterii. Quomodo autem malum illud contrahat anima, salva fide potest ignorari, quia Spiritus Sanctus non voluit hoc certis et perspicuis Scripturae testimoniis patefacere. [Google] Cf. also [Baier's brief dogma-historical remarks I, 67](#), nota c; furthermore [Luthardt, Dogmatik. ¹¹, p. 168 f.](#)

388) M. 716, 57 [[Trigl. 1081, 57](#) 

389) The attempt to answer this question has led, on the one hand, to Calvinism (denial of universalis gratia), and on the other hand, to semipelagianism and synergism (denial of sola gratia). It goes without saying that not the question itself, which has been asked in multiple forms (*cur alii, alii non; cur non omnes; cur alii prae aliis*) and pretty much at all times (also by Luther and the old Lutheran theologians), involves sin and error. Sin and error have been taught by those who, with Melancthon, the father of synergism within the Lutheran Church, have answered the question by means of "different behavior". Also the Formula of Concord places its statement: "One is hardened etc., another, so well in the same guilt, is converted again" [[Trigl. 1081, 57](#) questions, when it says: "In these and similar questions," etc. But it warns against answering the question when it adds: "In these and similar questions Paul sets for us a certain goal (*certas metas*), how far we are to go, namely only so far that we are to recognize God's judgment in the one part, ... which we all would have deserved well," and that we, the other part, "recognize and praise God's goodness without and against our merit ... and praise" because God "does not harden and reject us, who are nevertheless in the same guilt". Cf. the detailed exposition in the doctrine of conversion ([II, 285 ff.](#) [*sic*: [II, 585 ff.](#)]) and in the doctrine of the Election of Grace (III, 566 ff.).

If we thus hold the scriptural concept of open questions and theological problems, it is obvious that it would be foolish to spend much time and energy on their treatment. After describing theological problems as things that lack scriptural testimony, Reusch adds, *Inutilis est eorum cognitio, et vanae sunt de eisdem disputationes*. ["Reflection upon them is useless, the disputations about them unprofitable."]³⁹⁰⁾ Dannhauer reminds us that many questions are treated by the scholastics which are either not answered at all or yet not clearly answered in Scripture; but in regard to the result and practical use, he adds: "One milks the goat, the other keeps the sieve under." ³⁹¹⁾ Truly we have enough to do in learning and teaching and sticking to what is revealed in Scripture. Luther counts the treatment of useless questions, which are not commanded to us, to "hindrances of the gospel", because thereby the commanded great main things are pushed into the background and the large crowd is only too easily to be had for human thoughts, which satisfy the curiosity. This is what happened, Luther says, to the Jews with the research of their genealogical registers, and this is also what happened in the papacy with the bickering over useless fables and gossip, because everyone wanted to be right.³⁹²⁾ Luther's words of warning are as follows: "These are two hindrances to the Gospel: one, if one teaches otherwise, that is, if one drives the law and works into the consciences; the other, if the devil, seeing that he cannot overthrow the faith directly, cunningly sneaks in from behind and raises useless questions, so that one is troubled and the main issue remains behind, as there are dead saints and departed souls, where they remain, whether they sleep, and the like."³⁹³⁾ There is always one question after another, that there is no end to them. There, the tiresome presumption worries about unnecessary and useless things, which are neither commanded nor serve the cause. Thus the devil comes behind the people, opens their mouths, so that they gape at it and lose it. And then a fool appears, who also wants to be seen, raises something new and strange,

390) Annotationes in Baieri *Comp.* 1767, p. 52 [Baier-Walther, I, 67].

391) *Hodosophia, Phaen.* XI, p. 667, ed. 1713: *Unus hircum mulget, alter supponit cribrum.*

392) To 1 Tim. 1:3. 4. St. L. IX, 863 f.

393) How much we know about the state of the souls between death and resurrection from the Scriptures is explained in III, 574.

that one should say that he is more learned than others: then the mob bursts with heaps, opens eyes, ears and mouths. So they are silent of faith and love; for they think it is daily bread, that they have all heard and know enough; [it] is vexatious to hear one thing continually."

In what special sense recent theologians, because they deny the inspiration of Scripture and want to draw Christian doctrine from within themselves, speak of "problems" will be dealt with under the section "Theology and Certainty."

12. The church and the church dogmas. ^

If only the *doctrina* present in the Holy Scriptures is justified in the Christian church, as was explained in the previous section, then the question of what church dogmas are and what value they have is already answered in substance. We add a special section on this, because the question of dogmas is a much discussed topic in the church of the present day. Some argue very strongly for an "undogmatic" (*creedless*) Christianity. They reduce Christianity and the "proper" task of the Christian church to the "social gospel" (the social gospel). The "social gospel" is meant in such a way that the church forgets the "hereafter", including heaven and hell, or lets it recede into the background and instead focuses on the "hereafter", the happiness of mankind in this world. The "Social Gospel" considers "Boston as of equal importance with the New Jerusalem, because it takes, almost literally, the vision of St. John, who saw the 'New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven' to occupy this earth."³⁹⁴) Others hold that the Church cannot do well without dogma. But the old dogmas, which have outlived their usefulness, must be replaced by a new dogma, adapted to the present, about which, of course, the proceedings have not yet been concluded. Some have also said that

394) Winchester Donald, *The Expansion of Religion*, 1896 p. 125. The detailed exposition *L. u. W. 1920, p. 270 ff*: "The modern theology of this world." Also *L. u. W. 1921, pp. 2 ff*: "Christianity as an Otherworldly Religion." Here are also the bibliographical references. On the same subject go the *doctrinal proceedings of the Michigan District, Report 1919, pp. 44 ff*. [Rev. E. Berner]

the old dogmas could very well be retained, only they would have to be "educated" or "liberalized".³⁹⁵⁾

We will not go further into "undogmatic" Christianity here. It renounces from the outset all church dogmas. If we turn to the other part, which considers dogmas necessary, we stand before the fact that various definitions of church dogma are presented to us.³⁹⁶⁾ In order to point out which dogmas rightly deserve the predicate "church", we start from an insufficient definition. The proposal has been made to call such doctrines ecclesiastical dogmas as "seek or claim church recognition." This definition is much used, but it is insufficient because experience teaches that it is precisely "unchurchly" doctrines that claim recognition with the greatest determination. Some examples prove this. One of Rome's dogmas is that justification before God is not only by faith in the Gospel, but also by keeping the commandments of God and the Church.³⁹⁷⁾ Rome also insists so vigorously on the recognition of this dogma that it pronounces anathema on all who trust in God's mercy in Christ alone, without works of the law, to attain justification before God.³⁹⁸⁾ Nevertheless, this Roman dogma is not churchly, but so unchurchly that it excludes from the church all who believe it. "Ye have lost Christ (κατηργήθητε ἀπὸ Χριστον), who would be justified by the law, and are fallen from grace." "Those who deal with the works of the law (δσοι ἐξ ἔργων νόμον ειαίν) are under the curse."³⁹⁹⁾ Rome also has the dogma of the supremacy and infallibility of the Pope."⁴⁰⁰⁾ Rome also claims credit for this dogma to the extent that it curses all who

395) For literature on this point, cf. R. Seeberg, "Brauchen wir ein neues Dogma?" 1892; the same, [Grundwahrheiten der christlichen Religion, 5 1910, pp. 61 ff](#); Theodor Kaftan, "Moderne Theologie des alten Glaubens,"², 1906; Loofs under "Dogmengeschichte RE.³ IV, 753 ff; Nitzsch-Stephan, [Dogmatik, 3, pp. 2 ff. 47 ff](#); Horst Stephan, [Glaubenslehre, 1921, pp. 19 ff](#).

396) In Scripture, the word occurs both of state and church ordinances, as can be seen in Luke 2:1 and Acts 16:4.

397) *Trid. Sess. VI*, sau. 10, 11, 12, 20. 398) A. a. O.

399) Gal. 5:4; 3:10; 4:21-31.

400) Cf. the evidence III, note 1639. In full detail in Günther, *Symb.*³, p. 378 f. [sic: 3rd ed. 1898 p. 394; 4th edition 1913, p. 378 f.]. [sic: [3rd ed. 1898 p. 394](#); [4th edition 1913, p. 378 f.](#)].

reject it.⁴⁰¹⁾ Nevertheless, it is not an ecclesiastical dogma, but expressly forbidden in the Christian church, because Christ is the sole ruler and the only teaching authority in his church.⁴⁰²⁾ On Reformed church territory we encounter the dogma of the immediate divine revelation and effect of grace. *Dux vel vehiculum Spiritui non est necessarium*. "Efficacious grace acts immediately."⁴⁰³⁾ This dogma, too, has striven and continues to strive so vigorously for recognition that the Lutheran doctrine to the contrary is rejected as injurious to the majesty of God and promoting a mere intellectual Christianity (intellectualism).⁴⁰⁴⁾ Nevertheless, at this point we are not dealing with a church dogma, but with a human conceit, for which there is not even a semblance of Scriptural proof,⁴⁰⁵⁾ which rather directly contradicts the διά ὄγον, διά τον εναγγελίον, εξ ἀκοής, διά λοντρον παλιγγενεοίας, τω λοντρον τον νδατος.⁴⁰⁶⁾ Among the Arminian Reformed and the synergistic Lutherans we meet with the dogma of human cooperation to conversion and salvation. This dogma also urges recognition with no small energy. Its protectors claim that without "limitation" of *sola gratia*, forced conversion, *gratia particularis*, and other misfortunes are the necessary consequence.⁴⁰⁷⁾ Nevertheless, synergism is not a church dogma because Scripture consistently teaches *sola gratia*.⁴⁰⁸⁾ The more recent theologians, and indeed even those who are averse to dogmas, while disagreeing greatly in doctrine, advocate with great unanimity the thesis that Christian doctrine is to be drawn and standardized not from Holy Scriptures but from the inward, the "experience," etc., of the theologizing subject. This strange dogma, too, does not appear at all modest, but with the assertion that

401) The Decree of the Vatican Council, reprinted in Günther, op. cit. p. 379. [sic: [3rd ed. 1898 p. 394](#); ; [4th edition 1913, p. 379](#) f.; Engelder *Popular Symbolics* (1934), p. 162].

402) Luke 22:25; Matt. 23:8. 10.

403) Cf. the section "The Means of Grace and the Enthusiasts," III, 150 ff.; also the section "Summary Assessment of the Reformed Means of Grace Doctrine," III, 168 ff.

404) *The Representatives of the Reformed Means of Grace on the War Path*, III, 192 ff. 150 ff.

405) *The Examination of Reformed Scriptural Evidence* III, 175 ff.

406) Jn. 17:20; 1 Cor. 4:15; Rom. 10:17; Tit. 3:5; Eph. 5:26.

407) The detailed exposition [II, 564-598](#).

408) Cf. the section "The Causing Cause of Conversion," [II, pp. 546 ff.](#)

intellectualism, biblicism, dead orthodoxy, etc., would result if Scripture were recognized as an infallible work and used as the only source and norm of Christian doctrine. That this is not an ecclesiastical dogma, but one that overturns the foundation of the Church, has been amply demonstrated in the preceding section. We are therefore dealing with an inadequate definition of "dogma" when a doctrine "claiming ecclesiastical recognition" is placed among the "church dogmas."

In positive exposition it is to be said: Every dogma is ecclesiastical which is drawn from the "textbook" of the Christian church, the Holy Scriptures; and every dogma is unchurchlike which does not have its "arrival" (Luther's expression) from the Scriptures. The factual situation is, as was also explained in detail in the previous section, that the Christian Church has no doctrine of its own at all, but only Christ's doctrines, teaches and confesses. Luther: *Ecclesia Dei non habet potestatem condendi ullum articulum fidei, sicut nec ullum unquam condidit, nec condet in perpetuum*. To be sure, the Christian Church teaches, confesses, and approves (*approbat*) *articulos fidei seu Scripturas*, but not as overlord (*more maioris sive auctoritate iudiciali*), but as subject (*more minoris*), like a servant (*servus*) the seal of his lord.⁴⁰⁹⁾ And this is true not only of local congregations, but also of all larger church assemblies, synods, councils, etc.⁴¹⁰⁾ The question has also been dealt with whether doctrinal determinations which are given in Scripture only in sense, but not in expression, are rightly called church dogmas. *In concreto*, the question is whether we could address, for example, a dogma of the "Trinity," of "homousia," etc. We will agree with Luther when he says with regard to the ὁμοούσιος: "It is true that one should not teach anything in divine matters apart from the Scriptures, as St. Hilarius writes, 1. *De Trin.* This does not mean otherwise than that one should teach nothing else [than the doctrines of Scripture]. But that one should not need more and different words, that cannot be kept, especially in disputes, and when the heretics want to make things wrong with blind grips and turn the words of Scripture upside down; then it was necessary that one put the opinion of Scripture, set with so many passages, into a short and summary word,

409) Opp. V. a. IV. 373. St. L. XIX, 958.

410) Cf. the further exposition under the section *Ecclesia Repraesentativa* III, 496 ff.

and to ask whether they held Christ *homousion*, as the opinion of the Scriptures is in all words." ⁴¹¹⁾

What is true of synods and councils and of all large and small church assemblies is of course also true of the individual theologian and his theology and especially of the "dogmatist" and his "dogmatics". The theologians, and especially also the dogmatists, are churchly only in so far as they recognize in principle of only Scripture as the source and norm of theology, and the practical result, the doctrine, is not a *mixtum compositum* of Scripture doctrine and human thought, but *theologia έκτυπος*, only reproduction of the doctrine present revealed in Scripture. All merely human teachers, even if they present the doctrine according to Scripture, the theologian and especially also the dogmatist does not use as source and norm of the doctrine, but only as *testes veritatis*, "as witnesses, in what form after the apostles' time and in what places such doctrine of the prophets and apostles has been preserved."⁴¹²⁾ The truly Lutheran dogmatists refer this also to the symbols of the Lutheran church; for they confess "first of all to the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments as to the pure, clean fountain of Israel, which alone is the one, true guide by which all teachers and doctrines are to be judged and discerned."⁴¹³⁾ In passing, a good word is to be said here for "ancient dogmatics." It is fairly commonly asserted that the old Lutheran dogmatists did not set forth their doctrine from Scripture, but used Scripture only as "a collection of proof points" for the ready-made church doctrine. This assertion is historically incorrect and, where it occurs *bona fide*, is based on ignorance of the facts. In the old dogmatics, as represented by Quenstedt, for example, the Christian doctrine is not only proven by Scripture, but also presented from Scripture. Anyone can convince himself of this who takes the trouble to read up in Quenstedt's *Systema Theologicum*, in the case of the individual doctrines, the εκθεσις and θέσεως βεβαίωσις. What an incomprehensible thought we are asked to accept in "the whole of Scripture," with which modern theology *pro domo* struggles and eliminates Scripture as the source and norm of theology, is to be set forth later.

411) [St. L. XVI, 2212](#), Erl. 1 25, 292.

412) Formula of Concord. M. 568, 1. [[Trigl. 849, 1](#) 

413) Formula of Concord. M. 568, 3 [[Trigl. 851, 3](#) .

The "ecclesiastical dogma", that is, the doctrine drawn from the Holy Scriptures, is also the factor that preserves the internal coherence between the theological disciplines and secures their theological character, if we divide theology, for example, into dogmatic, historical, exegetical and practical theology. Historical theology is the prowess, wrought by the Holy Spirit, not only to present events with historical accuracy, but also to judge the events and conditions established by documents according to the Holy Scriptures, that is, to place them under God's own judgment, which we possess in the Holy Scriptures. This judgment according to Scripture makes church history a theological discipline. Judging events according to the subjective view of the person engaged in church history or according to some other extra-biblical standard destroys the theological character of church history. A Christian church history tells us "how the dear gospel has fared in the world," as Luther occasionally puts it. Therefore, where things are done properly in the church, the election of a professor of church history is based on the fact that the person to be chosen must be well versed in the doctrine of Scripture in all its parts, so that the teaching of church history will not be confusing, but rather Christianly instructive. The teacher of church history should not aim at "reverence for history", as we recently read, but should, like any specialized theology, convey and strengthen reverence for Word of God. — Exegetical theology is the Holy Spirit-given prowess to hold students to the meaning expressed in the words of Scripture and to point out erroneous expositions as contradictory to text and context. Lest exegesis compromise its theological character, the exegete must hold fast *Scriptura Scripturam interpretatur* and *Scriptura sua luce* throughout. All extra-biblical material, whether it concerns language or historical circumstances, must not be decisive in exegesis. This is especially true with regard to historical circumstances. Any exposition is to be rejected which interprets the words of Scripture according to a "historical background" not given in Scripture itself, but taken wholly or in part from contemporary profane writers. All historical background necessary to understand Scripture is given in Scripture itself. This subject is to be taken up again with the teaching of the Holy Scriptures under the section "Scripture and Exegesis". —

Practical theology is the ability of the Holy Spirit to practically apply the pure Christian doctrine recognized from the Holy Scriptures in all functions of the public ministry, i.e. in public sermons and in private pastoral care, in the catechetical instruction of young and old, in the government of the congregation, etc. It is obvious how the theological character is quite directly endangered in the practical field as soon as extra-biblical things gain space here.

From this it follows that the theological disciplines cannot be separated from each other. Just as the dogmatist must be at the same time exegete, historian and practical theologian, so also the exegete, historian and practical theologian must be at the same time good dogmatists in the sense that they know the doctrine of Scripture exactly in all its parts. The desire for an "undogmatic" Christianity has been countered by the dictum: "Only dogmatics is edifying." This is quite true if by dogmatics is understood the *doctrina divina* which is present revealed in Scripture and which alone is to be taught in the Church of Christ. In the Christian Church everything depends on doctrine, as is evident from Christ's general instruction of Matt. 28: "Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you!" Theological teachers as well as practical pastors should never forget this. All theologians who reject the direct communication of "supernatural truths" from Scripture, that is, the doctrine of Scripture, as promoting "intellectualism," thus reveal that they have forgotten what is their office. As for the practical pastors, they should not forget that they have to preach above all doctrines, the divine doctrine found in the Holy Scriptures. Their sermons must be, as we usually express it, "doctrinal sermons." About doctrinal sermons, what they are, how they work and why they are often refrained from, we would like to let Walther have his say. He writes:⁴¹⁴⁾ "No matter how rich a sermon may be in exhortations, punishments and consolations, if it is without doctrine, it is an empty, meager sermon, whose exhortations, punishments and consolations float as if in the air. It is impossible to say by how many pastors and how much is sinned in this respect. No sooner has the pastor touched upon his text and subject of teaching than he begins to admonish or rebuke or comfort. His

414) [Pastorale](#), p. 81 f.

sermon consists of almost nothing but questions and declamations, beatitudes and woeings, requests to examine and work on the mind and conscience, so that the listener, always touched in mind and conscience, cannot come to any calm reflection. But far from such preaching being particularly heartfelt and bringing about true life, it is rather designed to preach people to death, to kill any hunger they may have for the bread of life, and to methodically cause weariness and disgust with the Word of God. It must be repugnant to every listener if he always sees himself admonished or rebuked, or even comforted without salt, without the foundation having been taken by doctrines. It is, of course, easier to do this extemporaneously in such a way that the sermon nevertheless has the appearance of being lively and powerful than to present a doctrine clearly and thoroughly. And that the latter is easier may be the main reason that some preach so few doctrines that they usually choose such topics themselves, which already presuppose the knowledge of the matter in the listeners and therefore promise only practical application of the subject. In many cases, however, the reason for this is undoubtedly that, because they themselves do not have a thorough knowledge of the revealed doctrines, they are naturally unable to explain them thoroughly to others. Still others, however, may finally do so little doctrine in their sermons because they stand under the delusion that detailed presentations of doctrine are too dry, leave the listeners cold, and do not serve for revival, conversion, and a true living and active Christianity of the heart. But this is a big mistake. It is precisely the eternal thoughts of God's heart revealed to us men for salvation in the Scriptures, precisely these truths, counsels and mysteries of faith, which have been concealed from the world but made known to us through the writings of the prophets and apostles, that are the heavenly seed that must be sown in the hearts of the listeners if the fruit of true repentance, uncolored faith and sincere, active love is to grow in them. True growth of a congregation in Christian character is not possible without sermons rich in thorough doctrines. He who lacks this is not faithful in his office, even though he may, by his constant zealous exhortation, severe punishment, or comforting, which is intended to be especially Evangelical, have the appearance of being consumed with faithful care for the souls entrusted to him."

13. The purpose of theology, which it seeks to achieve in man. [^]

The theologian has to take great care not to be misled about the purpose of his activity. The purpose of theology, seen from the point of view of men, is first of all not culture and civil righteousness, although Christianity cultivates men most surely and most quickly and makes them good citizens. Nor, secondly, is the purpose of theology the "satisfaction of the intellectual needs of men" and the enrichment of human knowledge in general, although theology gives answers from Holy Scriptures to many questions which human research strives in vain to answer.⁴¹⁵⁾ The purpose that theology should and wants to achieve in man after the Fall is the deliverance from eternal damnation, to which all individuals of the human race are doomed, or, which is the same thing, the leading of man to eternal salvation (σωτηρία, *salus aeterna*). This purpose of Christian theology is enunciated 1 Tim. 4:16: Τοντο ποιων (namely, if you wait of the Christian magisterium) καί σεαντόν σώσεις και τους άκονοντάς σου. According to Matt. 13:52, every scholar of Scripture is "taught unto the kingdom of heaven" (μαθητευεις τη βασιλεία των ουρανών). By this end the church office of teaching is the most important office on earth, the καλόν εργον in the eminent sense.⁴¹⁶⁾ If Luthardt respects the "immediate relation of theology to salvation" in the old Lutheran theologians, but at the same time censures them as "scientifically incorrect,"⁴¹⁷⁾ this censure has its reason in the fact that Luthardt represents a theology that has lost sight of its purpose of existence. This is the theology that wants to transform faith into knowledge already in this life and, in order to achieve this purpose, wants to draw the Christian doctrine not from Holy Scriptures but from the Ego of the dogmatizing subject. It is to be acknowledged that Luthardt did not want to relate this theology "directly" to salvation. It would be terrible if salvation depended in any way on a theology that teaches in principle

415) For example, theology provides reliable information about the metaphysical problems of being and becoming (Col. 1:16. 17; Gen. 1:12, 13), about the solution of which philosophy is known to diverge in all directions.

416) 1 Tim. 3:1.

417) Compendium ¹¹, S. 4.

from within the theologian instead of from the mouth of God. But by renouncing the address from God's mouth and the direct relation to salvation, this theology should also renounce the claim to have in the Christian church "its very inner life, right and support".⁴¹⁸⁾ It is an exotic plant in the church and does not belong to the plants planted by the heavenly Father,⁴¹⁹⁾ because in the church of God only God's Word (λόγια Θεου) is to be spoken and through it the salvation of men is to be sought.⁴²⁰⁾ Walther quotes from Meisner's *Philosophia Sobria* on the purpose of theology: "He who does not always intend this purpose (the salvation of man) and does not have it in view in all his theory [or γνώσις, knowledge], does not deserve the name of a true theologian."⁴²¹⁾

The terminology of the old theologians about the purpose of theology is not bad at all. They say: *Subiectum operationis theologiae est homo peccator, quatenus ad salutem aeternam perducendus est.*⁴²²⁾ Civil society or the state also has to deal with *homo peccator*, but not in so far as he is to be led to salvation, but in so far as the state has the purpose of protecting bodily life and bodily goods against the outbreaks of sinful human nature with bodily rebuke. The theologian, on the other hand, and the Christian Church in general, do not concern themselves with the civil punishment of sins, but merely with the revelation of the guilt of sin before God through the sermon of the divine law, in order to mediate thereafter the forgiveness of sins and salvation through the preaching of the Gospel. However, this purpose of theology, the *salus aeterna*, is not achieved in man by several ways, but only by one way. Every man who reaches the *salus aeterna* reaches this goal only through faith in Christ or, what is the same thing, through faith in the gospel of the grace of God in Christ, Jn. 3:36: Ὁ πιστευων εις τον υιον ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον ο δε ἀπειθών τω νιω ονκ δψεται ζωὴν, ἀλλ ἡ οργή τον Θεον μένει Ιπ αυτόν. Thus theology, as a "middle end" (*finis intermedius*), aims first of all at the production and preservation of faith in Christ, as the apostle Paul says of himself that he has his ministry εις ντακοήν πίστεως.⁴²³⁾ Of course, theology also aims

418) Luthardt, *Comp.*, p. 6.

419) Matt. 15:13.

420) 1 Petr. 4:11; 1 Tim. 1:4; 6:3. — Tit. 1:1- 2 (επ ἐλπίδι ζωῆς αιωνίου).

421) *L.u.W.* 14, 76 f.

422) Baier I, 40.

423) Rom. 1:5.

at sanctification and good works. Titus is to teach the believers, καλῶν ἔργων προῖσταςθαι.⁴²⁴⁾ But not as the cause or precondition or means of obtaining the forgiveness of sins and salvation, which is a characteristic of the teachers whom the apostle Paul curses,⁴²⁵⁾ but as the consequence and effect of the forgiveness of sins and salvation already obtained without works through faith. In this way, the theologian achieves both the right quality and a pleasing quantity of good works.⁴²⁶⁾

14. The external means of theology by which it reaches its goal in man. [^]_—

Just as the theologian must not lose sight of the scriptural purpose of theology, which is to produce faith in Christ and to lead to salvation, so he must not allow himself to be blinded to the means by which this purpose is achieved. Such means are not: worldly power, external coercion, government aid, *social affairs*, etc. The temptation to fall for such unchurchly means is not small. As long as the theologian still has the flesh about him, he is inclined to consider his position as pastor of a congregation or even as professor of theology more honorable and secure if the state stands behind him with its authority and power. In the past and now, this has even caused some to advocate state-church relationships and to reject the "Free Church," the only outward form of the Church of Christ ordered by God. But even theologians who belong to free churches are exposed to the temptation to resort to unchurchlike means for the building of the church, as we see in this country in *social affairs*, *community churches*, in the insistence on a "strong church government," etc. Therefore, to the Ικανό της εκ των θεων, which ought to be proper to a theologian, belongs⁴²⁷⁾ a hearty confidence in the means of grace ordered by God, inconspicuous before the world and one's own flesh, in the εναγγέλιον της χάριτος των θεων.⁴²⁸⁾ This is what Christ commanded his church to teach and preach, and when his apostle bids farewell to the pastors and congregations of Ephesus for this life,

424) Tit. 3:8. 425) Gal. 1:8.

426) More detailed explanation III, 56 ff. 427) 2 Cor. 3:5.

428) Acts 20:24.

he does so with the words: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the Word of His grace, which is mighty to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified." ⁴²⁹⁾ All of us, pastors and professors, have to learn this again and again in faith. As far as church government in particular is concerned, Schleiermacher also mentioned the "management" of the church as the ultimate purpose of theology.⁴³⁰⁾ We can put up with this, provided the right means of guidance, God's Word, is meant. The Christian church is led or governed merely by God's Word. The external arrangements which smaller or larger church bodies make for fellowship purposes should not be called the "governing means of the Christian church." Luther: "Christians cannot be governed by any means without the Word of God alone. For Christians must be governed by faith, not by outward works. Faith, however, cannot come by any word of man, but only by God's Word, as St. Paul says Rom. 10:17: 'Faith comes by hearing, but hearing comes by the Word of God.'" ⁴³¹⁾

15. Theology and science. [^](#)

We must not enter into the question of whether theology is a science until there is an understanding of the concept of science, because the word science is used in various senses and even more often without any sense.

If by science one understands "an ordered natural knowledge," that is, a knowledge which man has gained without the revelation of Holy Scriptures by way of observation of nature and himself, Christian theology is not a science. The reason for this lies in the fact that of that which constitutes the specific content of Christian doctrine, namely, the Gospel of Christ, neither the vast domain of nature nor the conscience of man gives any knowledge, as Scripture clearly teaches.⁴³²⁾ From the revelation of God, which is present in nature and in the human conscience, not the Christian, but only the so-called natural religion or the religion of the law can be recognized.⁴³³⁾ Furthermore: If science in the field of

429) Acts 20:32.

430) The Christian Faith, Presented in Context According to the Principles of the Evangelical Church, 1, 16.

431) [St. L. X, 406](#).

432) 1 Cor. 2:6-16.

433) Rom. 1:18 ff; 2:14. 15.

theology is understood as a higher level of knowledge compared to the knowledge of faith, then theology is not a science in this sense either. The reason for this lies in the fact that even the most learned theologians do not go beyond the explicit revelation of the Holy Scriptures with their knowledge of spiritual things. Even with them, as with all Christians, in this life the organ of cognition of spiritual things (the *medium cognoscendi*) remains only faith. In still other words, the theologian, too, recognizes of spiritual things only as much as he believes on the basis of the revealed Word of God.⁴³⁴⁾ "The beginning, middle, and end of theology is to believe the Word of God." The fact that the theologian's knowledge is as a rule extensively greater is due to the fact that, as a result of persistent study, he recognizes more details or secondary circumstances from the revelation of Scripture. It does not stand in such a way that the theologian knows what the other Christians only believe. For the theologian, too, knowledge is faith and faith is knowledge. The philological, philosophical, historical, etc. knowledge of the theologian, which he has acquired beforehand, is not just knowledge. The philological, philosophical, historical, etc. knowledge of the theologian, which he has ahead of other Christians, belongs to the external theological apparatus, not to the inner essence of knowledge, and, properly used, serves only the knowledge of faith. They serve the exact understanding of the scriptural word, i.e. the exact understanding of the divine revelation; they do not enable or entitle the theologian to have his own thoughts about spiritual things, i.e. thoughts that are created from himself. When a number of recent theologians define theology with preference as the science of Christianity in the sense that it is the task of theology to elevate faith to knowledge, there is a great self-deception and apostasy from the principle of knowledge of theology.

If one understands by science a certain knowledge in contrast to mere views, opinions, hypotheses, etc., then theology is the science κατ' ἐξοχήν, that is, the most accomplished science that can exist on earth. The reason is this: Whereas in all fields of knowledge belonging to the realm of nature we have only a compilation of human observations and human conclusions, which by the nature of the thing (*errare humanum est*) yield more or less uncertain results (philosophy, astronomy, medicine, etc.), so

434) 1 Cor. 13:12; Jn. 8:31-32; Rom. 1:5.

the Christian theologian has God's Word, i.e. God's own observation, view and doctrine, in the Holy Scriptures about all objects with which he has to do as a theologian, whereby of course (*errare in Deum non cadit*) every error and uncertainty is absolutely impossible. Jn. 17:17: "Thy word is truth" and Jn. 10:35: "The Scripture cannot be broken."

Against this was and is objected: Granted that what the Scriptures teach is truth or objectively certain, there still remains in question the subjective certainty, namely, whether man also rightly recognizes or understands the doctrine revealed in the Scriptures. It is said, for instance, "The pure objectivity of those who merely want to adhere to Holy Scriptures, namely, not only as a norm but also as a source, is only appearance." And this is justified by the fact that the content of Scripture must necessarily pass through the subjective conception of the theologian.⁴³⁵) To this it is to be said: even the faith by which the Christian theologian, like every other Christian, apprehends or recognizes God's own doctrine in Scripture is not an opinion or view produced by men themselves (*fides humana*), but a knowledge or conviction (*fides divina*) wrought by the Holy Spirit through the divine Word itself, that is, quite certain knowledge or certain cognition.

Faith is the product not of "the wisdom of men," (ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ) but of "the power of God" ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ⁴³⁶); it is therefore, in contrast to worldly knowledge, the one certain knowledge, as Scripture itself declares (1 Cor. 2:12): "We have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." "ἵνα εἰδῶμεν τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ χαρισθέντα ἡμῖν."⁴³⁷) But this subject will be further treated under the section "Theology and Certainty." It should only be pointed out here how Luther describes the certainty which prevails in theology. He says: "The Holy Spirit is not a skeptic, and has not written doubts or opinions in our hearts, but assertions more certain and firm than life itself and all experience."⁴³⁸) Even later Lutheran dogmatists, who reject scientia as a generic term for theology, admit that theology may very well be called a science if the certainly prevailing in it is seen as opposed to an opinion.

435) [Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 11.](#)

436) 1 Cor. 2:5. 437) 1 Cor. 2:12.

438) *Opp. v. a.VII, 123 sq.: Spiritus Sanctus non est scepticus nec dubia aut opinionones in cordibus nostris scripsit, sed assertiones ipsa vita et omni experientia certiores et firmiores.* [[Google](#)] [St. L. XVIII, 1680.](#)

Thus Calov says: "It should be noted that it is not a question of whether theology can be called a science in a more general sense of the word, nor of whether theology, because of its perfection, should not rather be called a science than an opinion or an imperfect skill (*habitus*) Both we readily admit, because it is also called a science in a wider sense by the Holy Spirit, 1 Cor. 12:8, and is properly taught here and there by Thomas [Aquinas] as well as by Augustine, that it is not merely an opinion, but also a science."⁴³⁹⁾

In our time, we do not like to call theology a science because the word has been misused by recent theologians. The discrediting has been done by those theologians who assign to theology the task of elevating faith to knowledge or of proving Christian doctrine to be true before human reason. This is impossible because the natural man cannot know the truth of the gospel, ψυχικός άνθρωπος ου δέχεται τα του πνεύματος του θεού ... ου δύναται γνώναι.⁴⁴⁰⁾ Therefore Christ's command is not to prove the gospel to the world, but to preach it to the world, κηρύξατε το εὐαγγέλιον πάση τη κτίσει. The apostle Paul possessed a scientific education. But this very apostle emphasizes very strongly that he abstained from scientific demonstration even before a scientifically educated audience, e.g., the Corinthians, so as not to impose false supports on their faith.⁴⁴¹⁾ Ancient theologians express this aptly and briefly thus: *Theologia non est habitus demonstrativus, sed exhibitivus*. What they mean by this is that theological aptitude consists in presenting or announcing the Christian doctrine to the world, not in proving it to be true on the basis of reason. The proof of truth is provided by the Holy Spirit, who is connected with the proclaimed word, breaking the secure hearts by the proclamation of the Law of God, and by the proclamation of the

439) *Systema* I, 42: *Observandum autem, non disquiri, utrum theologia scientia dici possit laxiori vocis significatione, nec etiam, an theologia potius scientia ob sui perfectionem quam opinio aut imperfectus habitus dici debeat. ... Utrumque illud facile admittimus, cum et a Spiritu Sancto vocetur scientia laxa significatione 1 Cor. 12, 8 etc. et recte a Thoma ut et ab Augustino passim doceatur, eam non solum opinionem, sed et scientiam esse.* [Google]

440) 1 Cor. 2:14; 1:23. 441) 1 Cor. 2:1-5.

Gospel of God, producing faith in the gospel in the hearts and *eo ipso* the proof of truth for the gospel. Let us take the matter as it really is! In the state of the *contritio* worked by the law of God the interest in reasons disappears, because the man is "beaten into a heap". And then, when through the proclamation of the Gospel faith in the Savior of sinners has arisen, man rejoices in the divine truth that saves, without looking around for reasons of reason for the same. In this sense is meant the axiom: "The best apology of the Christian religion is its proclamation." Kirn thinks that man is sufficiently prepared for understanding the Gospel if he "seeks God and strives for moral perfection."⁴⁴²⁾ It is precisely the despair of all moral perfection or the personal realization of the worthiness of damnation (*terrores conscientiae, contritio*) that is the inevitably necessary but also sufficient preparation for the "understanding" of the Gospel. As far as the proofs of reason for the Christian religion are concerned, we can of course explain to the naturally rational man, especially to the educated one, that it is more reasonable to accept the Christian religion than to reject it. This belongs to the field of apologetics. But the apologist must remain aware that it is not his task to demonstrate the truth of the Christian religion to the unbeliever, but to expose to him the untruthfulness of unbelief, because unbelief, whether consciously or unconsciously, crowds intelligence, whereas it is based on the evil will, as Christ testifies: "every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved" Ὁ φαύλα πράσσων μισεῖ το φως καί ονκ ερχεται προς το φως, ἵνα μη ἐλεγχθῇ τά εργα αὐτοῦ.⁴⁴³⁾ There are no scientific reasons against Christianity. This subject will be further discussed under the section "The Divine Authority of Holy Scriptures," specifically at "*fides humana*."

16. Theology and certainty. [^]

As is well known, the "epistemological question" is much discussed in our time. This is the question of how a theologian arrives at the subjective or personal assurance of the Christian doctrine. There is no lack of confessions from

442) Ev. Dogmatik 3, p. 37.

443) John 3:19-20

the modern-theological camp of "positive" and "liberal" direction that the treatment of this question presents difficulties.⁴⁴⁴⁾ The difficulties are self-made. They have their reason in the apostasy from the Scriptures as the Word of God.

In the Scripture the "epistemological question" is answered very clearly and generally understandable. Christ instructs all Christians, including the theologians: "If ye continue in My Word, ... ye shall know the truth." ⁴⁴⁵⁾ In these words a double point is made: 1. That there is a Christian certainty, γνώσεσθε τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ye shall know the truth; 2. That Christian assurance consists in abiding, that is, in believing Christ's word, εἰν υμεῖς μέινψε ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῷ ἐμψ, if ye abide in my word. In this statement of Christ it is clearly taught that Christian "certainty of truth" coincides with faith in Christ's Word. And if it is further asked how it comes to faith abiding in Christ's word, Scripture does not leave us in doubt about that either. Christ's word has the property that it itself works faith."⁴⁴⁶⁾ The reason for this is that with the word of Christ, when it is excepted into the human mind by hearing or reading, is bound the effect of the Holy Spirit, as Paul 1 Cor. 2:5 says of the Christian faith, that it has not ἐν σοφία ἀνθρώπων, but ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ its origin and existence. Luther expresses this fact by the axiom: Man is *certus* passive, sicut *Verbum Domini* certum est *active*. Luther explains this in more detail thus: "Where this Word (God's Word) comes into the heart with right faith, it makes the heart like it, also firm, certain, and sure, that it becomes so stiffly upright and hard against all temptation, devil, death, and whatsoever it may be called, that it defiantly and haughtily despises and scoffs at everything that wants to doubt, to hesitate, to be angry and wrathful, for it knows that God's Word cannot lie to it."⁴⁴⁷⁾ But the Scripture gives further important and necessary lessons concerning the "epistemological question". In fact, with special reference to the teachers of the Church, it very emphatically

444) Frank, *System der christlichen Gewissheit* 2 1, 128. Ihmels, *Die christliche Wahrheitsgewißheit*, 1901, p. 8. Horst Stephan, [Glaubenslehre, 1921, p. 66.](#)

445) John 8:31-32.

446) Rom. 10:17: Ἡ πίστις ἐξ ακοῆς, ἡ δε ακοή διά ρήματος θεοῦ.

447) [St. L. III, 1887.](#) ed. 37, 8.

inculcates that adherence to the Word of Christ is the only way in which the Christian knowledge of truth is communicated. The apostle Paul testifies to every teacher who does not stick to the word of Christ that he suffers from conceitedness and does not know anything. The apostle Paul testifies to every teacher who does not stick to the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he suffers from conceits, knows nothing, has fallen into the plague of questions and disputes about words (νοούν περί ζητήσεις και λογομαχίας), that is, he passes by the Christian certainty of truth. Accordingly, we really find in Scripture the question of "Christian certainty" and specifically the question of "Christian truth certainty" answered in an all-round way.

To accept and follow the "epistemological" instruction of the Scriptures is of great practical importance for all Christians as well as especially for theologians. Whoever has Christian certainty at heart takes refuge in the Word of Christ, in the Holy Scriptures, as often as certainty wants to escape him, hears, reads and moves the Word in his heart, believes the Word through the action of the Holy Spirit in the Word, and submits his mind to the Word heard and read in the humble attitude: "Speak, Lord, for your servant hears!" (1 Sam. 3:10) Thus Luther, when Christian certainty, be it the "certainty of salvation," be it the "certainty of truth," wanted to escape from him, took refuge in the Scriptures. He says:⁴⁴⁸⁾ "I do not know how strong others are in spirit; but I cannot become so holy if I were still so learned and full of spirit as some make themselves believe. It still happens to me all the time when I am without the word, when I do not think about it or deal with it, so that there is no Christ at home, nor any desire or spirit; but as soon as I take a psalm or a passage of Scripture before me, it shines and burns in my heart, so that I gain courage and sense for others. I also know that everyone should experience this daily in himself." Luther therefore continues to give every Christian and every theologian the counsel that one "should hold one's thoughts to the letters [of Scripture] as one must hold one's fist to a tree or a wall, lest we slip or flutter too far and go astray with our own thoughts. This is what our enthusiasts lack, that they think that when they go into their high spiritual thoughts, they have got it right, and do not see how they are going astray without the word, letting themselves be seduced by vain falsehoods". In these words of Luther it is already stated in which way we

448) Sermon on John 17:1. [St. L. VIII, 749 f.](#)

avoid Christian certainty. We remain uncertain, or we sink back into uncertainty again, if we, in the opinion that we "could" (Luther's expression) already handle the Scriptures industriously and thus do not even outwardly give the Scriptures the opportunity to testify to themselves as divine truth. The situation becomes extremely dangerous, however, when we even assume a critical attitude toward Scripture. Then we not only pass by Christian certainty, but in this case we also experience the blinding effect of the word of Christ, which Christ describes in the words: "I praise you, Father and Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent (ἀπέκρυψας τὰντα ἀπὸ σοφῶν καὶ συνετῶν) and have revealed them to babes."⁴⁴⁹ And again, "I am come to judgment upon this world, that they which see not may see, and they which see may become blind."⁴⁵⁰ This warning also belongs to the all-round treatment of the "epistemological question". We will come back to this point later.

If we keep in mind what Scripture teaches about the "epistemological question," we will arrive at the right judgment about the efforts for "truth-certainty" that we encounter in the camp of modern theologians. In spite of their speaking of "immediate" Christian certainty, they are nevertheless looking for a reliable ground or supporting point for certainty. This sought-after reliable base has also been called the "storm-free castle," a castle to which the Christian "retreats at last" and in which he is secure against all hostile attacks. Where is the "storm-free castle" to be found? Christ, as we have seen, refers his Church to his word, which we have in the word of his apostles and prophets. Christ also assures us that his word is a strong castle, standing firmer than heaven and earth.⁴⁵¹ The Christian Church has also understood this instruction. She stood on the Holy Scriptures and from this basis of certainty she stood her ground against the attacks of the enemies. According to the modern theologians, Christ, the Christian church and, of course, Luther were in error. They think that the castle hitherto considered "storm-free"

449) Matt. 11:25.

450) Jn. 9:30. cf. Luther on Matt. 13:15. [St. L. VII, 194 f.](#)

451) Matt. 24:35; Mark. 13:31; Luke 21:33.

has finally been stormed in our time. It is impossible for the "sense of reality", sharply developed by modern scientific methods, to consider the Scriptures as God's own Word. We hear: "In the present day the orthodox doctrine of inspiration has hardly any dogmatic significance. But it is still asserted by individuals, such as Kölling and Nösger, with some variations. A thoroughly positive theologian says of such latecomers: 'Their number is small, their efforts fruitless, their displeasure with the comrades who are paving the way for themselves anew, unimpressive.' ... The rest of the theologians — even the conservative ones — reject the old doctrine." ⁴⁵²⁾ If it stands thus, however, it is necessary to look for a basis of certainty more certain and reliable than the Holy Scriptures. Modern theologians think they have found such a basis in man himself, in the Christian ego, in the self-consciousness of the theologizing subject. They give various names to this "storm-free castle": pious self-consciousness of the theologizing subject, born-again ego, Christian consciousness of faith, Christian experience, and so on. They also argued and still argue about the point on the territory of the ego where the actual seat of certainty is to be found, whether in feeling or in thinking or in willing or also in a combination of the mentioned factors. It was and is also argued whether the certainty is based on the moral ("ethical") constitution or on the "faith" of the Christian ego. But all of them, because they have given up the Scriptures as the Word of God, naturally agree that the castle of certainty is not to be found outside but inside the "Christian subject".

In the first quarter of the last century, Schleiermacher threw this theology of "self-assurance" onto the theological market in his "Glaubenslehre" (Doctrine of Faith)⁴⁵³⁾ and thus aroused general and lasting admiration, not only in the liberal, but also in the positive, especially also in the "Lutheran-confessional" camp. For Nitzsch-Stephan⁴⁵⁴⁾, Schleiermacher's "Glaubenslehre" is "a Reformation deed," an "innermost feat,"

452) Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 258.

453) Der christliche Glaube, nach den Grundsätzen der evangelischen faith im Zusammenhänge dargestellt von D. Friedrich Schleiermacher. The preface to the first printing is dated: Berlin, on the Saturday before Trinity Sunday in 1821.

454) *Ev. Glaubenslehre*, p. 43 ff.

"by far the most important dogmatics of all modern theology"; "its achievement is that it leads human self-consciousness to the height of its development". But also R. Seeberg calls Schleiermacher the "reformer of the theology of our century" and his "Glaubenslehre" (Doctrine of Faith) "the most perfect and most magnificent dogmatic work that the Evangelical Church has produced so far"; "this book has taught theology to the 19th century"⁴⁵⁵⁾ This admiration has also penetrated, as has already been mentioned, into the "Lutheran-confessional" camp. R. Seeberg reports, "It can be said that the entire dogmatic work of the church in the 19th century received its goals and trajectories through this work of Schleiermacher."⁴⁵⁶⁾ Namely, the so-called "Erlangen Theology" has also committed itself to the theology of self-certainty. It has recently been said of the Erlangen theologians Hofmann and Frank:⁴⁵⁷⁾ "Hofmann, and even more so Frank, have consciously and fundamentally advocated the full self-certainty of Christianity and its theology." Hofmann's decisive explanation of self-certainty has already been shared. Hofmann says of Christian consciousness that it "does not depend on the church, nor on the Scriptures to which the church refers, nor does it have in this or that the actual and proximate voucher of its truth, but rests in itself and is immediately certain truth. carried and vouchsafed by the indwelling Spirit of God."⁴⁵⁸⁾ As for Frank, in order to prove the "self-certainty" of Christianity and theology, he has written his "System of Christian Certainty," which contains 893 pages in the first edition and 954 pages in the second edition. Frank says:⁴⁵⁹⁾ "We are dealing here with the central and specific travail of Christian certainty, where no authority somehow coming from outside decides for itself, but the Christian subject itself and personally, about the ground and right of its certainty." How decisively Frank wants to have eliminated just also the Holy Scripture as foundation of the "certainty" meant by him, he says at a

455) R. Seeberg, Die Kirche Deutschlands im 19. Jahrhundert, 1903, p. 90, 84.

456) op. cit., p. 84.

457) Bachmann-Erlangen in *Theol. Literaturblatt*. Ihmels, Leipzig 1922, p. 395.

458) Scripture Evidence 2, p. 11.

459) System of Christian Certainty 2 1, 49.

place where he becomes a little rude. He writes:⁴⁶⁰⁾ "Whoever [Philippi is meant] holds up to me the 'objective' redemption [of Christ] and the Word of God instead of my 'subjective' point of view, I am not able to deal with him because he has not understood the question." This, however, as Bachmann says, "consciously and fundamentally teaches the full self-certainty of Christianity and its theology." Only we would like to limit Bachmann's "consciously and fundamentally" in something. Frank undoubtedly represented "the full self-certainty of Christianity and its theology" when he sat on the lectern or wrote books in his study room. Of course, we did not know Frank personally. But on the basis of communications from others and on the basis of what Frank otherwise wrote, we believe we may nevertheless assume that his intercourse with God did not take place on the basis of his "self-certainty" but was mediated on the very basis of which Philippi reminded him, namely, on the basis of the objective redemption of Christ and the objective Word of God. As Frank assumes in his "Theology of the Formula of Concord"⁴⁶¹⁾ that Melancthon never believed his synergism himself, so we assume that Frank also never believed "the self-certainty of Christianity and its theology" himself. We note this here also for the purpose of warding off the thought as if we were denying personal Christianity to all proponents of the self-certainty theory. As certain as it is on the basis of Holy Scriptures that this theory, when consistently carried out in practice, makes personal Christianity utterly impossible, experience, on the other hand, teaches us that there is a "happy inconsistency" or a "double-entry bookkeeping" also in the field of theological operation. We have reminded you of this before, and we will remind you of it repeatedly later. A few years ago, German papers reported that a theologian, who theoretically also practiced the theology of self-certainty, made the statement on his sick and dying bed that he now found his whole theology summarized in Jn. 3:16, with which he actually went out of his ego and "above himself," as Luther expresses it, and thus placed himself on a foundation outside of himself. But this only in passing.

460) [Op. cit., p. 115.](#)

461) [Vol. I, p. 135.](#)

As for the matter in question itself, the "self-certainty" of theology, it should be noted: A certainty that fundamentally rejects God's Word as its basis is 1. not Christian, 2. not certainty, 3. not scientific.

1. What Christ teaches and does is Christian. This is universally admitted. Now, as has already been pointed out at the beginning of this section, Christ teaches us very definitely also about the method of arriving at the knowledge of truth, that is, at "certainty of truth," namely, by abiding by his word. And because, as is well known, Christ is always right, Schleiermacher, Hofmann, Frank, and all who follow them in method and ascribe to the "Christian subject" wholly or half "self-certainty," that is, certainty independent of Christ's word, are in error. They do not think Christianly, but un-Christianly. Every theologian who assigns the predicate "Christian," "pious," "born-again," etc., to the consciousness that establishes itself independently, thereby deceives himself and others. All predicates of piety are without factual justification.

The claimed "self-assurance", which has detached itself from the Word of Scripture, the only basis of certainty, is not certainty, but imagination. Already in the apostolic church the opinion appeared that one could stand in the certainty of truth even without Christ's word. Within the Corinthian congregation there were people who considered themselves "prophets" and "spiritual", but in doing so set aside the apostolic word. Paul, however, firmly demands of these people that they abandon their self-certainty basis and place themselves on the basis of his apostolic word, because his, Paul's, word is Christ's word. "What I write to you are the Lord's commandments." And if someone does not want to stand on this basis, the congregation should let him go his way as incurable. This is the meaning of the sharp words, "If any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant."⁴⁶²⁾ There were also "self-confident" doctrines in other places. But the apostle also exposes their self-deception with the words: "If any man teach otherwise, and abide not in the sound doctrines of our Lord Jesus Christ ... he is darkened and knows nothing, but is addicted (νοσών, sick) to questions and wars of words."⁴⁶³⁾ In short, without Christ's word or, what is the same, without the apostles' word as a basis, there is no knowledge of truth or certainty of truth.


462) 1 Cor. 14:37-38; 2 Cor. 13:3.

463) 1 Tim. 6:3.4.

This now finds its application to the whole crowd of the newer theologians. As certain as they reject Christ's word as the origin and basis of certainty, so certain is their certainty an imaginary one. Just as they erect a barricade against the Scriptures, which are the Word of God, so they barricade themselves against the testimony of the truth of the Holy Spirit, which is effective in the Word of Scripture as the Word of God. They are dependent on issuing a testimony of truth, the *testimonium veritatis*, to themselves on the basis of what they feel, do, and judge about themselves in the way of "self-reflection." We therefore also find that the representatives of the theology of self-certainty take a decided antipathy to the testimony of the Holy Spirit. Partly they declare it expressly logically false, bringing it with the Roman theologians under the rubric of "circular proof," and partly they consider it insufficient after all. And this is natural from their point of view. Those who are self-confident see in the testimony of the Holy Spirit an unjustified competition, an unjustified intrusion into a business that the theologian has to take care of himself. Zöckler, for example, who belongs to the right-wing part of the newer theologians, states very clearly that the theologian must make himself certain. Zöckler does not want to completely reject⁴⁶⁴⁾ "the calling of the old Protestant dogmatists to the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti*", but he describes it as not covering the matter and adds: "It is a free act that depends on ourselves, that is left to our responsibility, a morally necessary consequence, but therefore left to freedom. Only through this free act do we ourselves create certainty."⁴⁶⁵⁾ But everything that in theology is built on man himself, be it the "certainty of salvation," be it the "certainty of truth," collapses as soon as and as often as the thunderbolt of divine law strikes even the "saints" into a heap, and leaves no one right, drives them all into terror and despondency.⁴⁶⁶⁾ Frank in his "System of Christian Certainty" occasionally recalled Archimedes' *πον στό*.⁴⁶⁷⁾ But this dictum speaks against him and against any form of Ego theology. It matters nothing whether

464) *Handbuch der theol. Wissenschaften*² III. 65.

465) The last sentence by Zöckler himself highlighted by the printing.

466) Schmalk. Art. M. 312, 2. [[Trigl., 479.2](#) 

467) 1, 133 f.

Archimedes really did make the statement or not: Δός μου στώ, καί τον κόσμον κινήσω, "Give me a firm standpoint, then I will move the world". In any case, this is to say that it would require a standpoint outside the world to lift the world. This is an apt picture of the important truth in the spiritual realm, that for our personal Christianity and theology we need a standpoint outside of ourselves and the whole world in order to be able to stand our ground against the world, the devil and our ego and win the victory. As we know, we have all these powers against us, especially in the matter of Christian doctrines and their certainty. We have this firm standpoint, which is outside of us, in Christ's word. Christ, as we have already been taught, says of his word, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Matthew 24:35) At the same time, we have already heard that Christ describes this word of his, which stands firmer than heaven and earth, as the standpoint on which all must place themselves who wish to be his disciples in truth and to know the truth. Luther understood this instruction and admonition of Christ. From his own deep experience, he therefore constantly counsels all Christians and especially all theologians to step out of their ego and to "go beyond themselves through the Word."⁴⁶⁸ Through this method, which stands in diametrical opposition to the theology of self-certainty, Luther attained the unshakable certainty of truth that is expressed, for example, in his "Answer to the blasphemous letter by the King of England":⁴⁶⁹ "As God lives, whichever king or prince thinks that Luther humbles himself before him, as if his doctrine repents of him and he has taught wrongly and seeks mercy, he deceives himself willfully and makes for himself a golden dream, since he will find vain filth as soon as he wakes up. For the sake of doctrine, no one is so great to me, I consider him a water bubble and even less; nothing else will come of it. ... Let him who is repulsed depart; let him who is afraid flee. I know that my reservation is strong and certain enough. Whether the whole world would cling to me and fall away again, that is all the same to me, and I think: even before, when I was alone, it did not cling to me. Whoever does not want to, let him leave; whoever does not stay, let him go forever." This is Luther's certainty of truth. And this certainty of truth

468) Luther. [St. L. XI, 1727. 1736.](#) 469) [St. L. XIX, 413. 422.](#)

has its reason in Luther's standing on the Scriptures as God's own Word, that is, on a standpoint outside of himself and outside of the whole world. Luther says of this word as being outside of him: "It is greater than a hundred thousand worlds, even greater than heaven and earth. The same word shall be my faithful counsel and strong tree, to which I will adhere, that I may bear and endure it. Where we do not hold to the tree, our nature is far too weak to bear the fierce hatred and envy of the world, and to endure the cunning plots and fiery darts of the devil."⁴⁷⁰⁾ And to recall again Luther's remarks on 2 Sam. 23: God's Word alone makes certain, *certum est active*; man, however, is made certain by God's Word, he is *certus passive*; but so certain that the heart "defiantly and haughtily despises and scoffs at everything that wants to doubt, to hesitate, to be angry and wrathful; for it knows that God's Word cannot lie to it." ⁴⁷¹⁾

What, on the other hand, stands with certainty in the theology of self-certainty? That the theology of self-certainty is in fact a theology of self-uncertainty is evident from a whole series of facts. Uncertainty is clearly indicated by the prevailing indifferentism with respect to Christian doctrines. Agreement in doctrines is virtually regarded as an abnormality. "Pure doctrine" is introduced with a "so-called" and made an object of ridicule. Now it stands thus: He who is certain of the truth is not indifferent with respect to doctrine, but resolutely holds to pure doctrine, just as this quality of Christian doctrine, that it is "pure," that is, not tainted by human ego products, is demanded throughout the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.⁴⁷²⁾ Uncertainty is further indicated by the prevailing unionism, which has little hesitation in holding church fellowship even with spirits who are clearly not of God. He who is certain of divine truth thinks and acts according to the order of Christ: "Beware of false prophets!" and according to the instruction given by "the apostle of love"

470) St. [L. XIII, 2621](#). 471) [St. L. III, 1887](#).

472) Cf. the detailed explanation under the section "The closer description of theology, conceived as doctrines".

concerning Christian brotherly fellowship: "If any man come to you, and bring not this doctrine [that is, the doctrine of Christ], receive him not at home, neither salute him: for he that saluteth him partaketh of his evil works." ⁴⁷³⁾ Uncertainty is also indicated by the fact that modern theology makes "problems" out of Christian doctrines. We saw under the section "Open Questions and Theological Problems,"⁴⁷⁴⁾ that there are, however, sano sensu open questions and problems in theology. These are questions that arise in the consideration of the doctrine revealed in Holy Scriptures (*quaestiones adnatae*), for the answer to which the testimony of Scripture is either entirely lacking, or yet is not present with such clarity pronounced that cautious theologians have dared to say: פֶּה אֶמֶר יְהוָה [HEBREW: Ex. 4:22 etc. "This saith the Lord"], γέγραπται. Prudent theologians, in fact, like Luther, wear a great shyness about putting a human opinion alongside the divine doctrine clearly revealed in Scripture, even if that opinion also has a probability in itself, such as Traducianism. Luther occasionally says, "What I myself am not certain of [namely, not certain from Scripture], I will teach no one."⁴⁷⁵⁾ Such theologians, to be sure, are not to be blamed but praised. By their refusal to decide what Scripture does not clearly decide, they place in the light the majesty of Holy Scriptures, their uniquely divine authority, which no human authority may stand beside. They speak and decide where Scripture speaks and decides; where Scripture does not speak and decide, they humbly step back and remain silent. In this sense, Christian theologians address open questions and problems. But with the modern theologians we are confronted with the fact that they make "problems" out of the very doctrines that are clearly taught in the Scriptures. They address the problem of the creation and preservation of the world, the person and work of Christ, conversion and justification, the inspiration of Scripture, the relationship between Christian and non-Christian religions, and so on. And from their point of view, they are truly dealing with "problems." First, the human subject, which they have substituted for Holy Scriptures as the source and norm of theology, is fallible. This they admit — admittedly in contradiction with the

473) Matt. 7:15; Rom. 16:17; 2 John 10:11.


474) p. 104 ff. . 475) St. L. XX, 1062.

the claimed "immediate certainty" — partly in fact, partly explicitly. But no certainty can come from a fallible source and norm. On the other hand, they draw — again in contradiction with the claimed "independent" certainty — supports of certainty outside the ego, which are all also uncertain.⁴⁷⁶⁾ Because of the "possible self-deception", the "Christian experience" is partly recommended, partly expressly made obligatory, to take due account of a whole number of factors lying outside the subject, namely of "the most distinguished forms of world view", of "the other truth possessions of mankind", of "the real results of the remaining scientific research", as there are: Historical science, other religious science ("comparative religious research"), the natural scientific research, etc. By these external factors the certainty is moved even more into unattainable distance, because admittedly generally secured results in the mentioned areas are not yet available. Thus, the "Christian subject" who seeks certainty stands before a collection of uncertainties. In addition, there is also their demand to link this collection of uncertainties "to a unified whole". This is truly sour work, a "problem" in the fullest sense of the word. The much-used expression that the theologian has to "work out" the concept of truth is significant. It is the rolling of the [Sisyphean stone](#), the [drawing of water from the Danaides](#). In short, the theology that has abandoned Scripture as the only source and norm of theology and pitched its tents on the "pious self-consciousness of the theologizing subject" is a theology of uncertainty.

In order to save the certainty of the theology of self-consciousness, it has been pointed out that, according to the Scriptures, the Christian can "read off" his Christian status and his standing in the truth from his Christian works, that is, he can recognize them by reflecting on his ego. This is true. This is the teaching of Scripture.⁴⁷⁷⁾ This is also doctrine of the Lutheran confession.⁴⁷⁸⁾ Although — also according to Scripture and the confession⁴⁷⁹⁾ — "the weather

476) Here Ihmels can be compared, [Zentralfragen](#), pp. 159-166. Also Kim, [Dogmatik](#), pp. 1-6.

477) Jn. 8:47; 1 Jn. 3:14; 2:3. 4; Matt. 6:14; 2 Petr. 1:10.

478) Apol. M. 135, 154 f. [[Trigl. 199, 154 f.](#) 

479) 1 Jn. 3:20; Rom. 4:16.- F. C.. 620, 43 ff.

can become so bad" and indeed not infrequently becomes so evil that the Christian, in order not to perish in uncertainty, is dependent on "reading off" his Christian status and his standing in the truth merely by means of faith from the objective factor of the Word of Scripture. But, as I said, it is and remains God's will that Christians should strive with all diligence to have a testimony of their standing in grace and truth also in their works.⁴⁸⁰⁾ But, as we know, this applies only to the good works of Christians. But if we examine the works or the fruits that have grown on the tree of "the pious self-consciousness of the theologizing subject," we immediately find that they are evil works. Schleiermacher, the "father" of self-consciousness theology in the 19th century, denies the guilt of sin and the redemption of the guilt of sin through the vicarious satisfaction of Christ, the eternal deity of Christ, the Trinity, in short, all the basic articles of the Christian religion. This evil nature of the fruits of Schleiermacher's self-consciousness is also admitted by more recent theologians. They admire Schleiermacher's method and follow it. But to the content of Schleiermacher's self-consciousness they bring "far-reaching misgivings." But, what kind of doctrinal fruits have also been brought by the "Lutheran-confessional" theologians who have embraced Schleiermacher's experiential method? With visible glee, the liberal wing of the newer theologians notes and publicizes the fact that the newer Lutherans, too, have abandoned Scripture as the Word of God and Christ's work as *satisfactio vicaria*, furthermore, original sin, the eternal, unchanging deity of Christ, the "doctrine of two natures," justification as *actus forensis*, the means of grace as the only means of presenting the forgiveness of sins and the origin and preservation of faith. But these are all evil works, which the Holy Spirit, who dwells in the heart of Christians, perhorresces [shudders]. Therefore, they cannot support the "Christian certainty", but only serve as support points for an imaginary certainty of the "human

 480) With the ancient theologians we have called good works *testimonia Spiritus Sancti externa*, in distinction from *testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum*, which consists in the faith in the Word of God worked by the Holy Spirit and coincides with this faith. Cf. the more detailed exposition under the sections "Faith and Testimony of the Holy Spirit," II, 534 f., and "Justification by Works," II, 654 ff.


self-consciousness" that has divorced itself from Christ's word and thus erected a blockade against the knowledge of truth.⁴⁸¹⁾

But even if self-certainty does not serve for certainty but for the opposite, is it not at least scientific? When Frank's "System of Christian Certainty" appeared in its first edition, it caused a great sensation. But there was also criticism. In particular, someone whom Frank himself calls an "excellent" theologian in the second edition of his writing, suggested to Frank that his (Frank's) great book should have only "little use", according to the author's own theory. If the "Christian certainty" is really, as Frank claims, completely independent of every thing outside of it, then Frank's book, because it also belongs to the things outside of the Christian subject, cannot be of any use to Frank himself or to any other man in the world for the production or preservation of the Christian certainty. However, this is

481) That also with Frank from the I-method followed by him the articles of the Christian faith "emerge mutilated and crippled" is explained in detail in *Lehre und Wehre* 1896, pp. 65 ff. 97 ff. 129 ff. 161 ff. 201 ff. 262 ff. The article under the heading "Frank's Theology" is written by v. Stöckhardt. Stöckhardt does not place Frank in every respect on the same line with the liberal wing of self-certainty theology. He acknowledges "that Frank does leave certain elements of Christian truth standing," but rightly adds, "This is not in (Frank's) system, this is inconsistency. That is a remnant of Christianity which has still asserted itself in the face of the alien theological principle. And this inconsistency is the best thing in his system, not its merit." Stöckhardt demonstrates that Frank sacrifices the infallible divine authority of Holy Scriptures to his ego. While Christ and his apostles unhesitatingly identify Scripture and the Word of God, Frank says, "I would not take upon myself the responsibility of teaching a Christian that belief in the truth of salvation involves belief in the absolute inerrancy of Scripture." (*L. u. W., op. cit., p. 97.*) Frank also drops the *satisfactio vicaria* of Christ. While Scripture expressly teaches that Christ suffered the punishment that we humans should have suffered (Is. 53:5; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13), Frank declares, "If one had to demand, for the sake of the substitution of Christ, that He suffered what condemned humanity should have suffered, the *satisfactio vicaria* would be invalid, since Christ did not suffer this very thing." (*L. u. W., op. cit., p. 138.*) In the doctrine of justification Frank, on the one hand, speaks quite orthodoxly of the *iustitia extra nos posita*; on the other hand, according to Frank, faith in justification comes into consideration not merely as a *medium ληπτικόν*, but also *qua* conduct of man, as an act of free self-determination. (*L. u. W., op. cit., p. 169.*)

a fatal objection against "self-certainty". This is the point at which Ego theology — it does not date only since Schleiermacher, but has existed abundantly before — comes into an embarrassment which it cannot overcome. When the enthusiasts in the 16th century claimed that they had the "Spirit" and, of course, also the certainty of truth independent of the "external word", Luther suggested to them that they should also stop their own speaking and writing, unless they stood in the arrogant opinion that "the Spirit could not come through the Scriptures or the oral word of the apostles, but through their [the enthusiasts'] writing and word he must come"⁴⁸²⁾ Frank acknowledges the justification of this objection. He admits, however, that his "system of Christian certainty" could not nor should not serve anyone to attain certainty. At the same time, however, he points out that there are other interests than Christian certainty in the world, namely the scientific interest, and this interest should be served by his "system". Frank writes literally in the second edition of his book:⁴⁸³⁾ "If one objects, as an outstanding theologian who died years ago did, if it is meant in this way, then the benefit should be small; for whoever has had such experience and stands in certainty does not need that proof, and whoever has not had it and does not stand in it, it is of no help to him, then I answer: I desired nothing more than to understand to some extent what is really there, the certainty that is actually given. ... Probably a small task, but nevertheless a task, namely a scientific one: whoever, standing in the certainty, carries no desire for it, let him leave it, and whoever does not stand in it, let him also leave it!"

But also against this assertion of Frank that the task he has set for himself has at least a scientific character, we have to take precautions in the interest of science. It is not easy to gain a reasonably clear idea of the train of thought by which Frank wants to provide scientific proof of Christian self-assurance. Frank's complaints that his "questioning" was not understood were justified. On the other hand, his evaluators not only pointed to the fact that Frank was speaking in unnecessarily difficult language, but also reminded of the possibility that Frank

482) Schmalk. Art. M. 322, 6. [Trigl. 495, 6 

483) I, 119 f.

himself has lost the overview of the train of thought through which "self-assurance" occurs in him. As far as we and others understand Frank, it should come to scientific certainty in the way that the subject "objectifies" itself, that is, sets itself as object of the consideration. If this happens, then the subject receives "impressions" through the object which it sets itself and which it is itself, which it raises to "cognition" through thinking and thus makes itself scientifically certain. Now it is always presupposed that the subject must not look around for an object outside of itself, namely also not to the Holy Scriptures and the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti*. "I cannot call upon the Holy Spirit," says Frank, "in so far as it stands in question whether what I hear is the testimony of the Holy Spirit, just as I cannot call upon the Holy Scriptures when it stands in question how I come to regard these Scriptures as holy." ⁴⁸⁴⁾ The procedure, therefore, proceeds as if someone looking for a foothold (for scientific certainty is to be presented as "becoming") were to seize himself by some part of his body and thus think he has found the necessary foothold. The theology of self-certainty cannot complain if some crude, partly ungallant images have been used to characterize its scientific method. For it has been said that the method of certainty under rejection of any "external" support by seizing the ego as an object is just as "scientific" as Münchhausen's, who pulled himself out of the swamp together with his horse by his own hair. In this country, to illustrate the scientific nature of the method, one has recalled the method of the man "who raised himself by his own bootstraps". And if the concept of "closed unity" is added, which the ego method aspired to and which was praised in such effusive terms ("systematic mastery," "scientific genius," "height of scientific development," etc.), then a somewhat ungallant image has been used. The admired "closed unity" has been compared with the unity which the cat creates by playing with its own tail and, seizing this part of the body as an object, moves more or less fast around itself. Without illustration, the situation has been correctly

 484) [System of Christian Certainty](#)² 1, 143.

described to the effect that the theologian, in so far as he has really detached himself from the Holy Scriptures, deals not with God and divine truth, but with himself and his human thoughts, or, as it has also been expressed, deals with "projections of the human ego". There is really nothing that can be said in favor of the scientific character of the theological ego method.⁴⁸⁵⁾

As a result: If modern theology wants to get in touch again with not only imagined but real "Christian certainty", and if it also wants to get in touch again with real science — to science belongs also an orderly economy of thoughts —, then it must — there is really no other way — make a big cut through itself. It must give up the unchristian and illogical idea of "self-certainty" in the field of Christian knowledge of truth and place itself again on the objective foundation on which the Christian church is actually built, on the word of the apostles and prophets or, what is the same, on the word of Christ.⁴⁸⁶⁾ There is no self-certainty in Christian theology, but it stands as Luther says: *Homo est certum passive, sicut Verbum Dei est certum active*. Nor does the modern-theological calling on Christ's person as opposed to Christ's word apply here. Admittedly, Christ's person is the cornerstone of his church.⁴⁸⁷⁾ But we can base ourselves on Christ as the cornerstone only by means of faith in Christ's Word, which we have in the Word of His apostles and prophets, as expressed in the immediately preceding words: *εποικοδομηθέντες ἐπὶ τῷ θεμελίῳ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν*. He who sets aside the word

485) Frank invokes Fichte's idealism of the object-setting by the subject for the scientific construction of self-certainty. He says: "This is the abiding truth of Fichte's idealism." (*Christl. Gewissheit I, 61.*) O. Flügel describes Fichte's idealism thus in "Problems of Philosophy and their Solutions," p. 96: "According to Fichte, the essence of things, as with Berkeley, consists in the mere conception; but he goes beyond Berkeley in that he no longer looks for an external cause of origin of these conceptions, but, expressly refraining from such a cause, regards our mind itself as the sole author of all that which it believes itself to perceive externally." Flügel finds in Fichte "only about two" inconsistencies. H. Ulrici calls Fichte's idealism "a nonsensical one-sidedness" (RE.² XV, 381).

486) Eph. 2:20; Jn. 8:31-32; 17:20. 487) Eph. 2:20; 1 Petr. 2:6.

of the apostles and prophets does not base himself on Christ, the cornerstone, but sets himself beside it. Luther expresses this, as we heard above, as follows: "If I am without the Word, if I do not think about it or deal with it, then there is no Christ at home."

To explain the spiritual and mental collapse of the theology of self-certainty, experience, etc., it is necessary to point out the fact that we already touched upon at the beginning of this section. This is the fact that experiential theology does not take a faithful, but a critical position against Word of God and thus against God Himself. It owes its emergence and existence to this critical position. Because it rejects Scripture as God's infallible Word, it has retreated to the "religious experience" of the theologizing subject, and from here it examines and criticizes Holy Scriptures. While Christ says, "I have given them thy word," and bears witness to this word, "Thy word is truth,"⁴⁸⁸ experiential theology, from the extreme left wing to the extreme right wing, says, partly outright, partly in a somewhat covert manner, but in unison, Thy word is not truth, but is interspersed with error. And while Christ commanded his church to place itself on the basis of his word for the purpose of the knowledge of truth, in order to be redeemed in this way from every human ego, especially also from the ego of the theologians, the theology of experience instructs the church to detach itself from the word of Christ given to the church and to withdraw into the "storm-free castle" of the self-consciousness of the Christian subject. The criticism is intensified by the repeated assertion that whoever does not go along with this change of basis, but still wants to draw Christian doctrine from Holy Scriptures and standardize it, as the first church, the church of the Reformation and "especially the old dogmatists" did, causes misfortune in the church; he does not convey "living Christianity" and "living faith", but "intellectualism", dead orthodoxy. This, in precise exposition, is the distinctly critical position that all experiential theologians take against God's Word and thus against God Himself. Experiential theology is the theology of elevation above God's Word. It is the Nietzschean "superman" in the theological field. Now we know from the Holy Scripture that this critical position against God's Word is an exceedingly

488) John 17:14, 17.

dangerous thing. God cannot stand the criticism of His Word. Christ gave the Word of God to men so that they would believe it. All those who criticize it instead of believing it come under the judgment regarding the knowledge of the truth, which Christ describes in the words Matt. 11:25: "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Word of God has *primo loco* an enlightening, *secundo loco* a blinding effect. Whoever, through the effect of the Holy Spirit in the Word, receives it not as the Word of man but, as it truly is, as the Word of God, as the Thessalonians do,⁴⁸⁹⁾ it enlightens; whoever opposes it with the criticism of his ego, it blinds. And this judicially blinding effect also binds the natural power of judgment. First of all, we point to the attempts that we find in almost all experiential theologians to place I-theology under Luther's protection. Luther is said to have rejected the theologians of the Word of Scripture and to have appointed the pious ego as judge of the Word of Scripture. Statements in which Luther very correctly emphasizes that faith must be added to the external word of Scripture are interpreted as if Luther wanted to detach faith from the external word of Scripture. This misunderstanding of Luther's statements goes beyond the usual measure of weakness of judgment that has been inherent in all men since the Fall.⁴⁹⁰⁾ Then we are confronted with the fact that the representatives of experiential theology accuse each other of "subjectivism". These accusations are meaningless, because the examination of them immediately shows that the accuser is no less sick than the accused in the hospital of subjectivism. W. Herrmann accuses Frank of subjectivism, as Ihmels reports and explains in detail.⁴⁹¹⁾ Herrmann, however, for his part wants to establish Christian certainty by the fact that the human subject imitates the "inner life of Jesus" in himself. As if this would not be subjectivism in the eminent sense of the word! Frank's subjectivism is also objected by Ihmels. Ihmels points out that Frank wants to use the "ethical approach" (the moral transformation of the Christian subject


489) 1 Thess. 2:13.

490) This point is elaborated on in the doctrine of Holy Scriptures under the section "Luther and Holy Scriptures."

491) *Die christl. Wahrheitsgewißheit*, pp. 124-167.

in comparison with the earlier unchristian subject) as the "foundation of the whole Christian state". Ihmels judges very correctly that the ethical nature of the Christian is subject to "manifold fluctuations" and therefore cannot be the foundation of the Christian state. Frank himself admitted these "manifold fluctuations". The foundation of the Christian state, says Ihmels, can only be justification. But even Ihmels does not succeed in getting beyond subjectivism because, like Frank, he mixes human activity into the belief in justification. If the words with which he concludes his "Central Questions" are to be taken seriously, he places coming to the gracious God and knowing the truth on human willing. He says there:⁴⁹²⁾ "Last of all, this truth [Christian truth] is called God, and God can only be revealed to him who wills him." This is truly a clearly stated subjective justification of both the certainty of salvation and the certainty of truth. Thus, as the Formula of Concord reminds us, Chrysostom also thought of the matter: *Trahit Deus, sed volentem trahit; tantum velis, et Deus praeoccurrit*. "God draws, but he draws him who wills; you have only to will, and God will precede you." Rightly does the Formula of Concord warn against these sayings because they are "introduced to confirm the natural free will ... contrary to the doctrine of God's grace" and "do not resemble the form of sound doctrine."⁴⁹³⁾ In the kingdom of God, it is not up to anyone's will or running, but up to God's mercy.⁴⁹⁴⁾ How we poor men stand in our way, and how foolishly we act when we seek a subjective ground of certainty! The ground of our certainty lies outside of us, in God's Word, in the Word of the apostles and prophets, on which the Christian Church is built. Every attempt to establish certainty, be it the certainty of salvation, be it the certainty of truth, by something that lies within ourselves, makes certainty uncertain, no matter what we call the foundation that has been laid in our ego, be it regeneration or moral transformation or self-determination and self-setting or human behavior and lesser guilt or antecedent volition, etc. Luther must have experienced this. That is why he calls out to Erasmus, when the latter insisted to him that coming to the gracious God should be conditioned by the *facultas se applicandi ad gratiam* ["ability to apply oneself to grace"]:

492) [Central Questions 2, p. 166](#).

493) M. 608, 86. [[Trigl. 913, 86](#) 

494) Rom. 9:16, 30-33.

"You are at my throat."⁴⁹⁵⁾ Therefore the same Luther, in regard to the "certainty of truth," holds to the axiom that man does not make himself certain, but is made certain by the Word of God; *homo certus est passive*, sicut *Verbum Dei est certum active*. So far is Luther from old subjectivism, which one would like to make him the protector of, that he also warns against making true faith, worked by the Holy Spirit, the foundation of certainty and thus basing faith on faith. Luther calls the one who does this an "idolatrous, denied" Christian. Luther writes:⁴⁹⁶⁾ "It is true that one should believe for Baptism [and Luther refers this also to the external objective word]; but one should not be baptized on faith. It is a very different thing to have faith and to rely on faith and thus to be baptized on it. He who allows himself to be baptized on faith is not only uncertain, but also an idolatrous, denied Christian, for he trusts and builds on his own, namely on a gift which God has given him, and not on God's Word alone, just as another trusts and builds on his strength, wealth, power, wisdom, holiness, which are nevertheless also gifts given him by God."

We have judged sharply on "self-consciousness theology" in the previous section. But it is not our judgment, but God's judgment, as it is clearly revealed in the Holy Scriptures. For this purpose, we also think of ourselves in this sharp judgment. The evil nature that asserts itself in the theology of "human self-consciousness" still dwells in all Christians, insofar as they still have the evil flesh about them. The flesh of Christians also still represents man who has fallen away from God, who, because he has fallen away from God, his center, makes himself the center of things, is self-conscious, "sets himself," also sets himself above God's Word of God, thus plays the "superman." Whoever is rid of this kind of ruling, let him praise God's grace, which led him without his merit into church relationships, which were not a hindrance to true theology, but only conducive to it. Whoever, in a haughty spirit, wanted to say to himself: "I thank you, God, that I am not like the other people", would *eo ipso* fall back into the theology of self-assurance, even in the midst of the outward

495) [St. L. XVIII, 1967](#). Opp. v. a. VII, 367. 496) [St. L. XVII, 2213](#).

fellowship of such church circles in which the theology of self-consciousness is doctrinally rejected in the most decisive way. Of course, the fact that the theology of self-consciousness is only an outworking of the evil kind found in all fallen Adam's children cannot relieve us of the duty to fight it with great seriousness. This theology is in every respect not what it pretends to be. To repeat briefly: Conceived to ensure the scientific character of theology, it puts its representatives in the role of the man who clings to his own ego to secure the wavering ego. We saw further that ego theology represents the most evil form of idolatry, namely self-deification. The ego theologian ascribes to himself the authority he denies to Holy Scriptures. And just as all idolatry is destructive,⁴⁹⁷⁾ so specifically is self-idolatry, which is the essence of self-certainty theology. Its result is not certainty, but imagination, self-deception, uncertainty, as has been shown in detail. We also saw that ego theology is very contagious. Schleiermacher was and is admired as the reformer of the 19th century. And the reason for this is twofold. Man, decentralized by the Fall, makes himself the center of things. Therefore, he is easily won over to a theology that assigns a position of dominance to his ego. Then the ego theology, although its essence is godlessness, appeared and still appears with the appearance of piety. The enthusiasts of the 16th century would not have torn the church apart if they had openly stated that their ideas were products of their human ego. Instead, they ascribed their vagaries to the Holy Spirit. They also, to affirm their piety, shed "troughs of tears," as Luther occasionally remarks. Thus Schleiermacher and all those who follow his theological method also spoke and still speak of the pious self-consciousness of the theologizing subject, of the reborn I, of the Christian experience, and so on. And although they reject Scripture as the Word of God and the *satisfactio vicaria*, they speak of great progress in exegesis and of a deeper grasp of the meaning of Scripture. All this deceives and is apt to seduce even "innocent hearts"⁴⁹⁸⁾. In the field of nature the Fichteian method

497) Ps. 115:4-8.

498) Rom. 16:18.

of setting the objects by the subject cannot cause any confusion, because the reasonless creature is not guided by the ideas of Fichte, Plato or any other ego. It stands differently in the spiritual sphere. There we see that the setting of objects by the human subject finds numerous admirers and buyers among the rational creatures. From this arises the duty of all those who have open eyes through God's grace to expose and fight the deception of self-consciousness theology.

In the foregoing, we have demonstrated the unchristian and pernicious character of the theology of consciousness primarily on the basis of German writings. But this theology also dominates pretty much all Protestant theology in the United States. Yes, it is quite actually at home with us, as in the land of the Reformed sects. Zwingli and Calvin, with their doctrines of the direct activity of the Holy Spirit, were principled representatives of ego theology. That the false principle could not fully develop at that time was due to the powerful influence of Luther. Because this influence of Luther was missing at the beginning of the 19th century, it need not surprise us that Schleiermacher with his reformed-pantheistic theology found admirers and followers in this country, even if one had to make exhibitions in detail.⁴⁹⁹) At present it stands in the United States that our old and new great universities, with a partial exception of Princeton, represent self-consciousness theology insofar as they are concerned with theology. We reported recently in "*Lehre und Wehre*"⁵⁰⁰) of an "organization of the laity" [*Fundamentalists*] against the apostasy from Christian fundamentals which has been reared in the universities and seminaries and now overgrows the country. The organization is justified by the fact that in the universities and most of the seminaries a generation of preachers has been raised who deny the Christian fundamentals. It is especially pointed out that in place of the divine authority the consciousness of the individual is put and in place of the vicarious satisfaction of Christ moral aspirations

 499) Instructive regarding Schleiermacher's influence in this country is Strong's long article "The Theology of Schleiermacher as Illustrated by His Life and Correspondence" in his *Miscellanies*, Vol. II, 1-57.

500) [1923, p. 89 f.](#)

are put after the model of the ideal man Christ.⁵⁰¹⁾ How far this "lay organization" will form a dam against the tide of destruction stands to be seen. In our church fellowship, which has united under the name of Synodical Conference, no organization of the laity against the pastors has yet been necessary, thank God. We do not know of a single one among the thousands of pastors who would touch the inspiration of Scripture and as a result be pushed to the standpoint of Ego theology. But it is necessary to keep in mind the danger that also threatens us through our American environment.

17. Theology and doctrinal. [^](#)

As is well known, especially in our time the further training of Christian doctrines is considered necessary and useful, not only by the variously graded liberal theologians, but also by the "confessionally" oriented newer Lutherans. Examples will be given in the following. The theologians who oppose doctrinal development have been called "Repristination Theologians", especially the so-called Missourians,⁵⁰²⁾ but also others, e.g. Philippi.⁵⁰³⁾ Also within the Lutheran Church in America, the formation of the Lutheran doctrines was put on the agenda.⁵⁰⁴⁾

501) We put some words from the publication *The Fundamentalist*, Vol. II, No. 1, here: "The Radicals are set on substituting 'evolution' for creation, 'the principle animating the cosmos' for the living God, consciousness of the individual for the authority of the Bible, reason for revelation, sight for faith, 'social service' for salvation, reform for regeneration, the priest for the prophet, ecclesiasticism for evangelism, the human Jesus for the divine Christ, a man-made 'ideal society' for the divinely promised kingdom of God, and humanitarian efforts in this poor world for an eternity of joy in God's bright home." Special reference is made to Dr. Fosdick's sermon recently preached in New York and widely circulated in the country: "Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, for example, not only preached his now famous sermon here in New York on the question, 'Shall the Fundamentalists Win?' in which he repudiated the inspiration of the Scriptures, the virgin birth, the vicarious atonement, and the second coming of our Lord, but this sermon was then put into pamphlet form, and has been broadcasted throughout the nation."

502) Cf. the preface to [L. u. W. 1875, pp. 1](#) ff. [33](#) ff., especially p. [65](#) ff.

503) [Hofmann](#) in "Schutzschriften," 1. issue, p. 2, against and about Philippi: "May nevertheless sleep away, who likes to have it comfortably."

504) Here belongs the article "Die falschen Stützen der modernen Theorie von den offenen Fragen", [L. u. W. 1868, p. 100](#) ff. [Ed. - sic! Not 97 ff.; also "Die moderne Lehrentwicklungshäresie," [1877, pp. 129](#) ff.

There can be no further development of the Christian doctrine, because the Christian doctrine is a completely closed quantity with the doctrine of the apostles, which is not to be further developed in the course of time, but is to be held and taught completely unchanged. Christ's teaching mandate, which we have Matt. 28:18-20, covers the whole period of the New Testament until the Last Day and is to the effect that His Church should teach the nations all that He (Christ) has commanded it. That we have Christ's doctrine in the doctrines of His apostles is also testified by Christ Himself when He says in John 17:20 that all the members of His Church will believe in Him through the word of the apostles until the Last Day. The apostles were also very clearly aware of this. Paul exhorts the congregations which had come into existence through his teaching: "Stand therefore (στήκετε), brethren, and hold fast the statutes (κρατείτε τὰς παραδόσεις) which ye are taught, whether by our word or epistle."⁵⁰⁵ And that Paul was not thinking merely of temporary validity of his doctrine is evident from the passages in which he expressly takes account of the times to come: "This I know, that after my departure there shall come among you abominable wolves, which shall not spare the flock. Even from among yourselves will arise" (ἀναστήσονται, Futurum) "men who speak perverse doctrines to draw disciples to themselves."⁵⁰⁶ "In the last times some will depart from the faith" (ἀποστήσονται, future tense) "and will cling to the seducing spirits and doctrines of devils."⁵⁰⁷ All that Paul teaches, he teaches in view of the Last Day, and thus as valid until the Last Day.⁵⁰⁸ And Paul's doctrine is such unchangeable divine truth that he pronounces a curse on anyone who allows himself to change his gospel.⁵⁰⁹ Hence also the apostle's exhortation to depart from all who teach otherwise, and confidently to consider them pompous babblers and know-nothings.⁵¹⁰ Particularly noteworthy for our time is the fact that Paul holds fast the perfection of apostolic doctrine even to those teachers who, under the appearance of a higher philosophical knowledge and a higher spirituality, wanted to supplement the doctrine of Christ. He says of all of them,

505) 2 Thess. 2:15.

506) Acts 20:29-31.

507) 1 Tim. 4:1 ff. Likewise 2 Tim. 3:1 ff.

508) 2 Tim. 4:1 ff; 1 Tim. 6:14, 15. Likewise Peter, 1 Petr. 5:1-4.

509) Gal. 1:6-9; 5:12. 510) Rom. 16:17; 1 Tim. 6:3, 4.



Who believe the doctrines of Christ preached by the apostles, that they are thereby made perfect in Christ, εστε ἐν αὐτῷ πεπληρωμένοι.⁵¹¹⁾
[130|131]

Against this it has been objected by representatives of doctrinal development that in the course of time the Church has seen itself compelled to express Christian doctrine in special formulations, such as ὁμοούσιος, πετοτόκος, *homo mere passive se habet*, etc., in the face of the rising error. This is a fact. But new formulations of the doctrine of Scripture brought about by the opposition, such as those just mentioned, are not evidence of doctrinal advancement, but rather evidence of the opposite, namely, of staying with the doctrine of Scripture (μένειν

511) Col. 2:6-9. 16-20. Peake says, for example on this passage (in *The Expositor's Greek Testament*): "There is no condemnation of philosophy in itself, but simply of the empty, but plausible, sham that went by that name at Colossae." Similarly Meyer and probably most recent exegetes. According to text and context, it stands that the apostle warns against all philosophy insofar as it wants to have a say in matters of Christian doctrine and to supplement Christian doctrine or make it more perfect. In this, says the apostle, lies an empty deceit, because philosophy is doctrine of men, κατὰ τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων while Christians are taught κατὰ Χριστόν, who is not a mere man, but in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead, so that Christian doctrine, as distinguished from all doctrines of men, is divine doctrine. Cf. note 138. In short, in this Colossian passage all philosophy, because by its nature it is human doctrine, is excluded from theology absolutely. Meyer thinks that "Luther's frequent condemnations of philosophy" are due to the fact that Luther "had in mind the degeneration of philosophy in Aristotelian scholasticism. Cf. on the other hand the quotation from Luther given on p. 17. Luther praises the philosophers insofar as they teach matters of the doctrine from natural reason. However, he states: "The philosophers do not find theologians; therefore Paul reminds us not in vain [Col. 2:8] that we should beware of philosophy, that is, of all philosophy, because such a one has nothing but words of human wisdom, which certainly cannot agree with the Gospel and therefore cannot agree with it." St. L. XXII, 1932. Furthermore, St. L. I, 484 f., on Gen. 6:5. 6: "In some places, the philosophers dispute not so foolishly (*inepte*) about God, about God's providence, through which God governs everything; and some seem to be so Christian in their address that they almost make prophets out of Socrates, Xenophon, Plato, etc.".. But because they thus dispute that they do not know that God sent his Son Christ for the salvation of sinners, these precious and beautiful disputations are the highest ignorance of God and vain blasphemy according to the opinion of this text, which briefly and roundly makes such a judgment that all imagination of the human heart is absolutely evil."


iv τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ). Luther proves conclusively that the first ancient "main councils" with their ὁμοούσιος, θεοτόκος, etc., did nothing new, but only made known the doctrines which Christendom believed from the very beginning on the basis of Scripture.⁵¹²⁾ Even by the Reformation of the church the Christian doctrine has not been in the least advanced, [131/132] but merely the old teaching of Scripture has been again drawn out of the papist jumble of the doctrines of men, taught and known. Luther was well aware of this. He says:⁵¹³⁾ "We do not invent anything new, but keep and remain with the old doctrine, as the old church had it; therefore we are with it the true old church, which teaches and believes the same word of God. Therefore the papists blaspheme Christ himself, the apostles and the whole of Christendom, when they call us new men and heretics. For they find nothing among us but only the old things of the ancient church." There is a failure to understand the Reformation when modern theologians, in order to place themselves under Luther's protection with their further doctrinal training, speak of a "new understanding of Christianity in the Reformation". That it teaches nothing new is also the glory of the Augustana.⁵¹⁴⁾ Likewise, the Formula of Concord does not want to set anything new, as is evident from its principled explanation: "that the

512) Luther proves this in his writing "Of the Councils and Churches" of the individual councils and then says in summary St. L. XVI, 2248 f.: "So we have the four main councils and the reasons why they were held. The first, at Nicaea, defended the deity of Christ against Arius; the second, at Constantinople, defended the deity of the Holy Spirit against Macedonius; the third, at Ephesus, defended one person in Christ against Nestorius; the fourth, at Chalcedon, defended two natures in Christ against Eutychen, but did not thereby establish a new article of faith. For these four articles are much more abundant and powerful in St. John's Gospel alone, even though the other evangelists and St. Paul and St. Peter wrote nothing about them, who also teach and testify to all these things powerfully, along with all the prophets. Now if these four main councils (which the bishops of Rome decree to be equal to the four Gospels, just as if such matters did not stand much more abundantly next to all the articles in the Gospels — so the donkey-eaters understand what Gospels or councils are!) neither want to nor can make or set anything new in articles of faith, as they themselves confess, how much less can such power be given to the other councils, which must be held inferior, where these four are to be and are called the main councils. ... But if they set anything new in faith or good works, be sure that the Holy Spirit is not there, but the unholy Spirit with his angels."

513) St. L. XVII, 1324. 514) Art. XXI M. 47, 1-5; 48, 1-6. [*Trigl.* 59, 1a-5 ; 59, 1b-6 ]

only rule and guide by which all teachings and teachers are to be judged and evaluated at the same time are the prophetic and apostolic scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. ... But other writings of the old and new teachers, as they have names, are not to be held equal to the Holy Scriptures, all of them are to be subjected to them, and are not to be accepted otherwise or further than as witnesses, in what form after the time of the apostles and in what places such doctrines of the apostles and prophets have been preserved."⁵¹⁵) That no new doctrine is presented in the Formula of Concord, even in the article about the person of Christ and especially about the *communicatio idiomatum*, is proven dogma-historically in the *Catalogus Testimoniorum*.⁵¹⁶)

The fact that there is no further education of the Christian doctrine is finally revealed by the fact that all [[132/133](#)] attempts at further education, seen in the light of day, prove to be a reshaping and destruction of the Christian doctrine. And this is not only the judgment of Luther and of those who are registered by the Ego theology as repristination theologians, but so judged also such State Church theologians of the 19th century, who had at heart the adherence to the Christian doctrine. Thus wrote D. Münkler in 1862 in the preface to his "Neues Zeitblatt":⁵¹⁷) "There is hardly any doctrine left which has not undergone considerable transformation, additions and eradications. If you start from the Trinity, go on to the doctrines of the person and work of Christ, of faith and righteousness, of the sacraments and the church up to the last things, you will hardly find anything in its old form and in its former value. Not infrequently it is changed to such an extent that only the old frame still reminds of the old picture, and sometimes even the frame is smashed as even too scarce and old Frankish. A small sample may illustrate this. If, according to church doctrine, Christ is truly God even in his humiliation, he has now been emptied of divine attributes, without which deity cannot be thought at all, or his deity is gradually worked into him until the resurrection. The death of Christ had to put up with the fact that it was no longer done for the atonement in our place and for reconciliation with God. The righteousness of faith through the declaration of God's righteousness

515) *Epitome*. M. 517, 1, 2. [[Trigl. 777, 1-2](#) 
[\[Trigl. 1107-1149; OldBookOfConcord.org here\]](#)].

516) M. 731-760.

517) Quoted in [L. u. W. 1875, p. 71](#) ff.

is said to be too wooden and external; in a somewhat obscured manner, works are again drawn upon. Law and gospel are mixed together again. The Word of God and the sermon are put on the back burner as if the sacraments were the main thing, or at least had to bring life into the church first. The visible church is again given such importance as if it were the true church, the holder of all God's promises. And what shall I say about the relationship of the churches, of office and governance, of chiliasm and eternal life? The disputes are before everyone's eyes, and if the dispute did not have something on it, it would not be so fierce. ... I suppose that if we were to agree on all these enumerated or not enumerated deviations and changes, would that still be called Lutheran doctrine, or would one have the courage to call that the continuation of Lutheran doctrine, which sweeps out the most essential matters of Lutheran doctrine like old rubble? I at least would not have the heart to call myself a Lutheran, and would openly confess: We have all deviated. ... It is quite certain that scientific theology will lose its credit in the not too distant future. While the other sciences are gaining the respect of the world by their true and undeniable progress, theology shows the most boundless confusion, and while it is progressing, no one really knows what the progress consists in, since one calls the other's progress regress, and the church has not only no gain to show from all progress, but only quarrels and bumps and wounds. Thus it has come about that the other sciences have formed a common bond around all educated peoples, and have taken all forces into their service, while theology of all kinds is fragmented and divided, which, according to its calling and its substance, should unite in the one salvation which is destined for all peoples. This is a very deplorable and depressing sight, which will certainly not encourage one to entrust oneself to the aberrations of theological science." In 1870 the Berlin "Ev. Kirchenzeitung" of April, founded by Hengstenberg and continued by Tauscher, judged:⁵¹⁸⁾ "We must say that the present time with its theological and church discord is the least suitable for the development of church doctrine. Are even the most churchly (!) theologians of the

518) Quoted in [L. u. W.](#), [op. cit.](#) [p. 70](#).

modern times, a v. Hofmann, a Thomasius, even a Hengstenberg, with their attempts to further develop this and that doctrine of the church, have pretty much — *sit venia verbo* — failed." Further on it says: "The indeed new impetus which the Christian doctrinal development has received from Schleiermacher has become as pernicious to doctrine as to life."

The most detailed proof that the advancement of doctrine attempted by modern theology is not an advancement of Christian doctrine, but an apostasy from it, was probably given by Dr. Walther in a series of articles found under the heading "What is it about the progress of modern Lutheran theology in doctrine?" in three volumes of *Lehre und Wehre*.⁵¹⁹⁾ Walther calls the theory according to which dogmas are formed only gradually "a Protestant-masked sister of Romanism" and a reshaping of the church "into a school of philosophers whose work it is to seek the truth eternally, while the church according to the Word of God is the 'home honor' to which the truth is entrusted as its most precious treasure, as its good supplement, that it may preserve it through the Holy Spirit, 2 Tim. 1:13-14; 1 Tim. 6:20." Walther also reminds us, together with the old Lutheran theologians, that the church, viewed historically, does not show a progressive and upward development of doctrine, but rather, as far as pure public doctrine is concerned, resembles the waxing and waning of the moon, "sometimes experiencing times of special visitations of grace, sometimes eclipses".⁵²⁰⁾

Finally, we refer back to what we have said in the section "Christianity as an absolute religion".⁵²¹⁾ We make attempts to educate ourselves only as long as and insofar as we do not yet know the Christian doctrine. After we have known it and insofar as we have known it by God's grace through faith in the Word of God, we stand worshiping before its unchanging divine greatness. As is well known, this is also the position of the holy angels towards the things which the apostles, sent from heaven by the Holy Spirit, proclaimed to us: εἰς αὐτὸν ἀγγελοὶ παρακύψαι.⁵²²⁾ "Repristination theology" is the only theology that has the right to exist in the Christian Church.⁵²³⁾

519) These are the volumes [1875](#), [1876](#), [1878](#).

520) *L. u. W.* [1868](#), p. [136](#) f.

521) p. 36-42.

522) 1 Petr. 1:12.

523) Jn. 8:31-32; 17:20; 1 Tim. 6:3 ff.; Eph. 2:20.

18. Theology and doctrinal freedom. [^]

As the freedom of all Christians consists in the fact that they have become free from their own will and bound or servants of God δουλωθέντες τῷ Θεῷ), ⁵²⁴⁾ so especially the doctrinal freedom of the teachers of the church consists in their being completely bound by the Word of God. This explanation of doctrinal freedom is explicitly given by Christ in the words, "If you abide in my address, then ... you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free (ἡ ἀλήθεια ἐλευθερώσει υμᾶς).⁵²⁵⁾ Insofar as the theologian takes for Christian doctrine and issues what comes from his own ego or from the ego of other men, he has fallen into bondage to man. The freedom of teaching, which has been demanded in our time especially for the theologians and which should consist in the fact that the theologian is not bound by the word of the Holy Scriptures (book bondage, unworthy compulsion to teach, legal spirit, etc.), is the freedom of the flesh, still differently expressed: the freedom of the "superhuman" who thinks to be superior to God's word and will.

In order to see what abnormality in the generally demanded freedom of teaching confronts us, we still pay attention to the following individual points:

The Christian church has only one doctrine until the Last Day. That is Christ. Εἰς ἐστὶν υμῶν ὁ διδάσκαλος, πάντες δὲ υμεῖς ἀδελφοί ἐστε ... καθηγητὴς υμῶν Ἰσὺν εἶς ὁ Χρῖστος.⁵²⁶⁾ What he, Christ, commanded his disciples, let them teach all nations until the end of days.⁵²⁷⁾ Although in the state of exaltation Christ is withdrawn from the Church according to his visible presence, yet even in the state of exaltation he is and remains the only teacher of his Church by his word, which he gave to the Church through his apostles, and to which word he refers his Church until the last day.⁵²⁸⁾ This is also how the apostles understood it. They bind the Christians to their doctrines.⁵²⁹⁾ But they do this because they know that they speak only Christ's word.⁵³⁰⁾ This is also how all the right teachers of the church understood it after the time of the apostles. Luther.⁵³¹⁾ "If someone wants to preach,

524) Rom. 6:22.

525) Jn. 8:31-32.

526) Matt. 23:8. 10.

527) Matt. 28:19. 20.

528) Jn. 8:31-32; 17:20. 529) 2 Thess. 2:13; Gal. 1:6-9.

530) 1 Cor. 14:37; 2 Cor. 13:3; 1 Tim. 6:3.

531) St. L. XII, 1413.

let him be silent about his words and let them be valid in worldly and household government; here in the church he shall speak nothing but the word of this rich landlord; otherwise it is not the true church. Therefore it shall be called, God speaketh." What an abnormality there is, therefore, when those who want to be teachers in Christendom claim "doctrinal freedom" for themselves! He who claims freedom of teaching places himself beside and *eo ipso* against Christ. Therefore all false teachers are called anti-Christians, 1 John 2:18: Νυν αντίχριστοι πολλοί γεγόνασιν. This point is treated in detail under the section, "Christ's Direction of the Prophetic Office in the State of Exaltation."⁵³²⁾

Christians have a clear and often repeated command in the Scriptures to listen only to those pastors who teach from the Lord's mouth — that is for our time: from the Holy Scriptures — and not from their own inner being.⁵³³⁾ To all who do not bring Christ's doctrines, they are to refuse the Christian brotherly greeting, ⁵³⁴⁾ consider them pompous ignoramuses⁵³⁵⁾ and depart from them.⁵³⁶⁾ Great, therefore, is the folly of pastors who want no obligation to the confession of the Christian congregation, on the ground that thereby their freedom of doctrine is unseemly restricted. The mere demand for freedom of doctrine reveals that such people do not know what divine order is with regard to the doctrines that are to be taught in the Christian church. But even greater is the ignorance of the theological professors when they claim "freedom of teaching" as a privilege due to them. To them everything said to the pastors finds intensified application, because they are to train the future preachers of the church. The objection that they, as representatives of "theological science," are entitled to doctrinal freedom is not valid, because Christ teaches very clearly that all knowledge or all knowledge of Christian doctrine is imparted only by abiding in Christ's Word. The mere claim of freedom of doctrine on the part of theological teachers clearly exposes the fact that they lack the qualification for the theological doctrine office.

A look at the history of the Church shows us the fact that the so-called scientific theology has enjoyed quite a long time and quite generally doctrinal freedom in the State Churches of the various countries. But this is also a main cause of the

532) [II. 400 ff.](#) 533) Jer. 23:16, 31. 534) 2 John 7-11.

535) 1 Tim. 6:3 ff. 536) Rom. 16:17.

present chaos in these churches. But even under free-church relationships, as here in the United States, the un-Christian demand for "freedom of teaching" has been widely given in church teaching institutions, even in circles calling themselves Lutheran. Even at our state universities, which by their very nature have no theological faculty, professors nevertheless demand freedom to teach their "religious views."⁵³⁷⁾

It is well known that in recent times it is generally claimed that two things are incompatible: being bound by Christ's Word and the "inner freedom" that is necessarily due to the theologian. If the theologian is obliged to consider himself bound to the Word of Scripture, then the Word of Scripture becomes a code of law fallen from heaven, a paper pope, etc., and in this respect there is a retreat to Catholicism. In order to grant the "Evangelical" spirit of Protestantism the absolutely necessary room for maneuver, it therefore remains only to abandon Holy Scriptures as the source and norm of theology and to retreat to the "life-warm" and "living" I of the theologizing subject. Thus argues, in essential agreement, all modern theology from the extreme left wing to the extreme right wing. It has been said that the right theology of the present day must get rid of "the Saul armor of ancient theology," namely, of the verbal inspiration of Scripture. Then it can "leap over the walls with God" like David.⁵³⁸⁾ On the other hand, it must first be remembered that — according to Christ's authoritative view — these two things are not only very compatible with each other, but also that the one thing, and that is the adherence to the Scriptural word, is the only means by which it comes to the knowledge of truth and to theological freedom. This is what Christus *disertis verbis* Jn. 8:31-32 inculcates in us: Ἐάν υμεῖς μείνητε ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῷ ἐμῷ ... γνώσεσθε τὴν ἀλήθειαν, καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια ἐλευθερώσει υμᾶς. On the other hand, in the same context, Christ points to

537) See James H. Baker, *American University Progress*, 1916, under the section "Academic Freedom," pp. 84 f.: "Problems may arise in discussion of ... religious and political beliefs." "The university is responsible for pioneer thought and must adhere to facts, and, like Huxley, let them lead where they will." Administrators have done their duty "when they appoint able and fearless men to the faculties and attend to the business details of university *management*."

538) Cf. Theodor Kaftan, *Moderne Theologie des alten Glaubens* 2, p. 121.

the fact that there are two classes of hearers, or readers, of his Word: those who recognize and willingly accept his Word as God's Word, and those who do not recognize his Word as God's Word, but consider it an annoying "external authority" and rebel against it. Christ gives the reason for this unequal position toward his Word in the words, "He who is of God (ο ὢν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ). he hears God's Word," ⁵³⁹⁾ and expressed in the figurative, "The sheep follow him [Christ], for they know his voice. But a stranger they do not follow, but flee from him, for they do not know the stranger's voice." ⁵⁴⁰⁾ Of the other class Christ says, namely, of the Jews, who rejected his word as against an intolerable "external authority," "Ye hear not, for ye are not of God" (ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἐστέ), and, "Ye know not my language, for ye cannot hear my word." ⁵⁴¹⁾ To put it more briefly, Christ says: God's children recognize God's Word in Christ's Word; those who are not yet God's children are not yet in the state of being able to recognize and accept God's Word in Christ's Word. Therefore, Christ calls out to the Jews who are grumbling about His word, as it were, appeasing them: "Do not grumble among yourselves! No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him." ⁵⁴²⁾ On the basis of this teaching of Christ, we do not consider that we should first prove the divine authority of Scripture to a man who still stands outside the Christian Church by reasoning, in order to lead him afterwards to the knowledge of his sins and to faith in Christ, the Redeemer of sins, but we preach repentance and forgiveness of sins to him, even without merely mentioning Scripture. If a man has become a Christian in this way — and there is no other way — a sheep of Christ's flock, a child of God, then he recognizes God's Word in the Word of Scripture, just as the children of God among the Jews recognized Christ's orally proclaimed Word as God's Word and accepted it from the heart. If, to speak with Ludwig Hofacker, the camel has gone through the eye of the needle, expressed without a picture: if a man has become a Christian on the way of the *contritio* and *fides* worked by the Holy Spirit, then he also leaves such passages of Scripture uncriticized, which he does not yet understand, because the truth of the *all* Scripture is not clear to him

⁵³⁹⁾ Jn. 8:47. ⁵⁴¹⁾ Jn. 8:47. 43.

⁵⁴⁰⁾ Jn. 10:4. 5. ⁵⁴²⁾ Jn. 6:43. 44.

is covered by the authority of the one ⁵⁴³⁾ whom he worships in faith as his God and Redeemer. This is the position on Scripture that Luther urgently recommends to every Christian: "If you cannot hear it, as it was six days [at the creation of the world], give glory to the Holy Spirit, that he may be more learned than you. For so thou shalt deal with the Scriptures, that thou mayest think as God himself speaketh."⁵⁴⁴⁾ And this is not a Christian's unworthy or "unfree" submission to an "external authority," but a filial, willing, free, glorious submission which the Christian exercises throughout his life in relation to God's rule, unless he understands that rule. This subject is again excepted in the doctrine of Holy Scriptures under the section "The Divine Authority of Holy Scriptures," specifically in the question of how Holy Scriptures become a divine authority to us men. There is also dealt with the benefit and use of such arguments that can produce human belief in the divine nature of Holy Scriptures.

19. Theology and system. ^

Also the word system is not always used in the same sense.⁵⁴⁵⁾ Therefore, it must be clarified in which sense, and in which sense not, theology can be called a system.

If we understand by system a coherent whole, then the Christian doctrine is a system. The Christian doctrine, which is taken only from the Holy Scriptures, forms a coherent whole in two respects: 1. in so far as the Scriptures, according to their content, do not present different human doctrines (Mosaic, Johannine, Petrine, Pauline, etc.), but the uniform doctrine of God (*doctrinam divinam*). *doctrine*), but presents the uniform *doctrine of God (doctrinam divinam)*, because all Scripture is inspired by God and is completely without error;⁵⁴⁶⁾

543) John 10:35; 17:14, 17.

544) Preface to the sermons on the first book of Moses. St. L. III, 21.

545) Cf. Bretschneider, Systematische Entwicklung 3, p. 39. Baier-Walther, Kompendium I, 76. Any larger Reallexikon, e.g. Center, *Century Dictionary*, VII, 6142, under "System". Kliefoth, Der Schriftbeweis des Dr. J. Chr. K. von Hofmann. Nitzsch-Stephan, Ev. Dogmatik, p. 10 f. 18.

2. inasmuch as in the Christian doctrine drawn only from Holy Scriptures the doctrine of justification διὰ της πίστεως χωρίς έργων νόμου stands in the center in such a way that all other doctrines are either presuppositions (*articuli antecedentes*) or consequences (*articuli consequentes*) of the doctrine of justification.⁵⁴⁷⁾ This connection of the Christian doctrines is also not a construction of Luther and the Lutheran dogmatists, but taught in the Holy Scriptures. When Paul says on the one hand that he preached the whole counsel of God,⁵⁴⁸⁾ on the other hand that in preaching it he knew only Christ crucified for the sins of the world,⁵⁴⁹⁾ he thus teaches that the forgiveness of sins for the sake of Christ's atoning death is the center of the whole Christian doctrine. Likewise, Peter designates the forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ as the central doctrine of all Old Testament Scripture when he says: "Of this [JEsu] all the prophets testify, that through his name all who believe in him should receive forgiveness of sins."⁵⁵⁰⁾ The unity of Christian doctrine is also evident in the fact that we cannot change any part of Christian doctrine without consequently affecting the whole.⁵⁵¹⁾ If, for example, we question that the Holy Scriptures are God's own infallible Word, this affects the character of the whole Christian doctrine. What is Christian doctrine is then not decided by God in his Word, but by the theologizing human ego. If the metaphysical deity of Christ is denied, then the *satisfactio vicaria* falls away,⁵⁵²⁾ and if the *satisfactio vicaria* is denied, there is no forgiveness of sins by faith without works of the law, no means of grace that offer forgiveness of sins *ex parte Dei* and demand only faith *ex parte hominis*,

546) Cf. the detailed explanation under the section "More detailed description of theology as doctrine," p. 57 ff.

547) Cf. the chapters "The Central Position of the Doctrine of Justification," II, 617 ff; "The Preconditions of Justification by Faith without Works," II, 611 ff; "The Relationship between Justification and Sanctification in the Narrow Sense," III, 6 ff.

548) Acts 20:27.

549) 1 Cor. 2:2.

550) Acts 10:43.

551) This is also pronounced Gal. 5:9: μικρά ζύμη όλον τό φύραμα ζνμ.οϊ. Meyer z. St.: "in doctrinal relation" said. Especially Luther on this passage L u. W. IX, 642 ff.

552) Rom. 5:10; 8:32; 1 John 1:7.

no Christian church that is the congregation of believers, no salvation that is attained through faith in Christ.⁵⁵³⁾ Luther: *In philosophia modicus error in principio in fine est maximus. Sic in theologia modicus error totam doctrinam evertit. ... Est enim doctrina instar-mathematici puncti; non potest igitur dividi, hoc est, neque ademptionem neque additionem ferre potest. ... Debet igitur doctrina esse unus quidam perpetuus et rotundus aureus circulus, in quo nulla sit fissura. Ea accedente vel minima, circulus non est amplius integer.*⁵⁵⁴⁾ ["In philosophy, a small error in the beginning is the most important in the end. Thus in theology a small error overturns the whole doctrine. ... For the doctrine is like a mathematical point; therefore it cannot be divided, that is, it can bear neither subtraction nor addition. ... Therefore, doctrine must be a certain perpetual and round golden circle, in which there is no fissure. When it is added or reduced, the circle is no longer complete"] Thus Luther decisively teaches the closed whole of the Christian doctrine and in this sense a "system" of the Christian doctrine. The closed inner connection of the Christian doctrine from the center of the doctrine of justification is also evident in the fact that without the article of justification no other article of the Christian doctrine is actually believed. It does not stand that one can believe the article of the Trinity, for example, or that of the person of Christ, and not believe that of justification. Certainly, the *fides humana* in those articles can be there, but not the *fides divina* which the Holy Spirit works. For the Holy Spirit enters a human heart only with the faith in justification.⁵⁵⁵⁾ Only when I believe, through the action of the Holy Spirit, that God has forgiven my sins for the sake of Christ's *satisfactio vicaria*, do I also believe, through the action of the Holy Spirit, that there is one God, that God is triune, that Christ is God and man, that there is a resurrection of the dead and eternal life, and so on. So much from the article of justification the Christian doctrine is *unus quidam perpetuus et rotundus aureus circulus*. The reason why we do not like the term "system" to characterize the Christian doctrine is that modern theologians usually call theology a system in the sense that it is not a system.

If one understands by "system" such a coherent whole, which is derived or developed from one supreme principle by thinking under deduction of the actually given (speculative system), then the Christian doctrine is no system. The formation of a system by human thinking is only

553) The detailed exposition under the section "[Objective and Subjective Reconciliation](#)" II, 411 ff.

554) *Ad Gal.* Erl. II. 334 sq.; [St. L. IX, 644 f.](#)

555) *Gal.* 3:1-3.

possible in the field of knowledge which does not deal with really existing but only with imagined things, as this is the case with "pure" mathematics (in contrast to "applied" mathematics). The speculative system building is already in its application to natural scientific and historical facts not only unscientific, but downright nonsensical, because it is based on the delusion that facts depend on human thinking. The speculative system formation is already in its application to scientific and historical facts not only unscientific, but downright nonsensical, because it is based on the delusion that facts depend on human thinking. Philosophical idealism has rightly been called a disease of the human mind, in which man imagines that his thoughts (ideas) are the rule and measure of all things. Edm. Hoppe remarked in the publication "Der Alte Glaube": "Nature" — and we add analogously: also history — "is not so kind as to bind itself to the scheme of the textbook." ⁵⁵⁶ In theology every human or speculative system formation is absolutely excluded, because the Christian doctrine is given in the Scriptures as a divine greatness, in which human thinking cannot nor should not change anything. Here every addition and every deduction is expressly forbidden.⁵⁵⁷ The activity of the theologian, therefore, consists neither in developing the Christian doctrine from one supreme principle or from one fact, e.g., from the fact of regeneration, by thinking, nor even in constructing it from the so-called "whole of Scripture," which is a logical monstrosity, but merely in taking the Christian doctrine in all its parts directly from the statements of Scripture which deal with the doctrines in question (*sedes doctrinae*). By thus putting together in one place what Scripture itself says about each of the doctrines, we have the ordered knowledge of Christian doctrine that is accessible and necessary for us men in this life. Also, of course, we can teach only as much about the context of the doctrines present in Scripture as is said about them in Scripture. With this method, gaps remain for human comprehension in this life. As examples of this, the scriptural doctrines of beatitude *sola Dei gratia* and perishing *sola hominum culpa* have already been cited earlier. Both doctrines are clearly revealed in Scripture. But whoever wants to systematize them, that is, to combine them into a unity in the sense of human reason,

556) Quoted in [L. u. W. 1907, p. 316](#).

557) Jos. 23:6; Matt. 5:17-19; Jn. 10:35; 8:31-32; Gal. 1:6-9.

corrupts either one or the other and becomes either a Calvinist or a synergist. Attempts to bring the scriptural statements about the Trinity to a rational unity have led to monarchianism on the one hand, and tritheism on the other. Most modern theologians have also wanted to make the scriptural statements about the person of Christ (*verus Deus* and *verus homo*) "epistemically" unified. The result is that they have rejected the "doctrine of two natures" and have thus taken a standpoint *extra ecclesiam*. Those who want to make theological knowledge "uniform" beyond the revelation of Scripture deprive themselves *eo ipso* of knowledge that deserves the predicate "theological." To save us from this derailment, the apostle reminds the theologians of all times of the fact that the knowledge of God, and therefore our doctrine of God in this life, is a fragmentary one: Ἐκ μέρους γινώσκομεν καὶ ἐκ μέρους προφητεύομεν.⁵⁵⁸⁾

This theme, "Theology and System," seems to us so important that we emphasize a little more forcefully some points already touched upon.

There is only one book in the world that is perfectly and inerrantly uniform, even though its writers were men of different levels of education and the first and last writers were separated by a period of about 1600 years. This book is the Bible. The perfect inerrancy of the Bible is due to the fact that it is consistently inspired by God and is uniform, unbreakable truth. This is what Christ and his apostles stand for with their authority, both with regard to the Old Testament and the New Testament.⁵⁵⁹⁾

Because modern theology denies the unified truth of the scripture with its inspiration, it takes refuge from the allegedly non-unified scripture in the pious consciousness, the religious experience, the reborn ego of the human subject for the purpose of obtaining a "unified whole". But this transfer of the basis of unity, considered a little more closely, does suffer from a self-contradiction. In spite of the denial of the inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures, modern theologians

558) 1 Cor. 13:9.

559) Jn. 10:35; 2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Petr. 1:10-11; 2 Petr. 1:21; Jn. 17:14, 17; 8:31-32.

admit that the pious ego or the religious experience is not to be trusted completely, but rather that there is the possibility of self-deception. Furthermore, it is conceded that with the ego method an almost infinite abundance of diversities has occurred and that the cornucopia of diversities is certainly not yet empty. But even more. It is further conceded, partly that the Holy Scriptures are to be regarded as an "authentic document" of the historical revelation of God, partly that the time in which the Holy Scriptures were written stood "closer" to the revelation of God than we, the late-born, in the 19th and 20th century. With these concessions the thought is taken that for the purpose of gaining a "unity" it would be more reasonable and safer to stay with the Scriptures than to retreat into the pious self-consciousness of the theologizing subject, which possibly deceives itself and which actually has put out of itself an almost endless abundance of diversities.

If we do not want to be drawn into the self-deception and the deception of others, which is bound up with this human system-building in theology, then we must absolutely hold that we are in the field of theology completely in the field of the given and fixed facts, in which no human thinking and therefore also no human system-building can change even the slightest thing. Rightly has been pointed out the analogy which exists in this relation between natural science and theology. For natural science, the things actually given in the field of nature are the "field of perception" or the "world of perception", as it has been suitably expressed. All human knowledge of natural things always reaches only as far as the observation and experience of the facts at hand reaches. If the natural scientist wants to arrange plants or animals systematically, he does not do so, as long as he proceeds truly scientifically, according to his ego, which is independent of the external world, that is, not according to his own thoughts as to how the plants and animals should be constituted, but he lets the arrangement depend entirely on the given nature of the objects situated outside him. In other words, the scientifically working naturalist does not make or construct his system, but he takes note of it and he recognizes it where and

as far as it is actually pronounced in the given things. Where the conjecture, the hypothesis or the speculation of the natural scientist begins, there natural science ends. To recall once more Hoppe's saying, "Nature is not so kind as to bind herself to the scheme of the textbook." One has clarified the matter in this country also in such a way that one has distinguished between a railroad system and a mountain system. We can construct a railroad system, however, in so far as it does not yet exist, but is to be built. A mountain system, on the other hand, because it already exists independently of our thoughts, we cannot construct, but only describe according to its given nature and according to the already existing relationship of the individual mountain chains to each other. This now finds its application to the formation of systems in theology. The theologian, and in general everyone who teaches in the church, has to deal with the given and unchangeable fact of the Word of God, which Christ gave to his church through the apostles and prophets. Word of God is as unchangeable and completed a fact as the creation of the world. Just as we men cannot change the created world but must accept it as a closed fact, so we in the Church are bound to Christ's Word with all doctrines. Christ's word is our "world of perception", and indeed our only "world of perception", as certainly as we are bound by divine order to abide by Christ's doctrine, to teach from God's mouth alone and not from our own ego or from the ego of other men.⁵⁶⁰ What comes from elsewhere than from God's mouth is straw among the wheat, not knowledge of truth but imagination, a product that is neither to be presented nor heard in God's house, in the Christian church. Thus it stands firm that in theology not the slightest room is left for human speculation or, what amounts to the same thing, for a system formation for the purpose of the "epistemic" grasp of Christian truth. Where gaps appear for our limited human cognition in our "field of perception", that is, in the revealed Word of God, we are careful not to fill the gaps with our own thoughts. There we remember, as already explained by the reference to 1 Cor. 13:9

 560) John 8:31-32; Jer 23:16.

the fact that the fragmentary knowledge of spiritual things is the normal state for the time of this life. — And one more point should be made in this connection. Even the modern theologians, who have abandoned Holy Scriptures as the source and norm of theology and have retreated to their ego, should recognize as impossible, even from their ego standpoint, the formation of a system or the construction of a unified whole. He who wants to construct a system in the sense of a unified whole must know the object with which he is dealing through and through, or must completely encompass it with his knowledge. The object of theology, however, is, as even modern theology admits, God, the God whom even natural reason still recognizes as the infinite and incomprehensible God. Therefore, also from the point of view of Ego theology, the unified system formation should be recognized as a titanic enterprise and — refrain from it.

4. Remarking on the question, in which sense and in which sense not theology can be called a "system", was said at that time by Kliefoth in the evaluation of Hofmann's system formation. Kliefoth wrote:⁵⁶¹⁾ "Hofmann wants to derive the whole of Christian doctrine from the fact of his Christianity, which has been brought to the simplest self-expression, in unbreakable necessity and with complete renunciation not only of church doctrine, but also of Scripture; or in other words: to let the said fact, by bringing itself to expression, unfold itself to the whole of Christian doctrine, and that in unbreakable necessity, and without anything being excluded from elsewhere. This is how I understood v. Hofmann's intentions and proved that I understood him correctly by his own statements. Now there are two ways of systematic treatment. The first one merely aims at arranging its substance according to its nature. It is the one applicable to empirical [actually given or present] substances. Therefore, its characteristic consists in two things First, it must always work *vis-à-vis* this empirical substance of its own; it can only arrange this empirical

 561) In the *Kirchl. Zeitschr.*, edited by Kliefoth and Mejer, year 6. Published separately under the title "*Der Schriftbeweis des D. von Hofmann*", Schwerin 1859, p. 174 ff.

substance of its own by simultaneously recognizing it empirically. Secondly, such an arrangement of empirical substances can result in a self-contained whole, a system, only if this substance itself is a whole in itself. ... From which we see at the same time that such a system must first of all look for its empirical sources and constantly adhere to them, build itself only hand in hand with empirical research and cannot be finished before the latter itself is completed.⁵⁶²⁾ ... But fundamentally different from it is that way of system building which has been in the minds of the speculative philosophers of all times: they wanted, starting from some simplest, to let emerge from this simplest, rejecting all empiricism, by self-development of that simplest, a system of cognitions, hoping that the unbreakable necessity of this process of development would give such a system and its individual propositions such a correctness and certainty that it would then afterwards not only coincide with everything that empiricism lets us recognize, but would also give the right key for empirical cognition. ... It does not need to be proved that this speculative kind of system building, which is fundamentally independent of empiricism, is something completely different from the first kind, which is based only on a materially corresponding arrangement of empirically gained knowledge. If we look at the relationship of both to the doctrine of salvation, I have no doubt that the speculative method is neither wholly nor half applicable to it, since God has revealed his salvation historically in word and work, and thus also wants it to be known by us in an empirical way. On the other hand, it is equally certain and self-evident that I consider the first empirical type of systematic treatment applicable to the doctrine of salvation, indeed that it seems to me more applicable to the doctrine of salvation than to anything else in the

562) In other words and in memory of Edm. Hoppe: Nature, as something actually given, is not so amiable to be directed after the natural scientist, but the natural scientist must, as long as he remains reasonable, direct himself after nature. Likewise, the historical facts are not so kind as to be guided by the historian, but the historian, if he does not want to degenerate into a novelist, must be guided by the attested historical facts. Where the naturalist and the historian begin to resort to hypothesis or to "exegesis," they should say so, in order to make known to the public where their science — that of the naturalist and that of the historian — has ceased.

world, because the words and works of God for salvation are certainly in themselves a harmonious whole. Just as all Christian dogmatists of all times have made use of this method. But for this very reason I insist, together with all these dogmatists, that the laws of this method should be observed, that the formation of Christian systematic theology should take place only *vis-à-vis* its own empiricism. ... If I now compare v. Hofmann's system demands with this, then it was undoubtedly present in his own statements that the empirical way of systematic treatment does not seem scientific enough to him, but that he recommends the way of speculative system formation. For he seeks a simplest as a starting point; that should unfold itself, from which should be derived in unbreakable necessity. Scripture and church doctrine are to be left aside; but what comes out will coincide with what is to be compared afterwards. Of all this, of these categories of necessity, self-development, derivation, the empirical kind of systematic treatment knows nothing; but the speculative not only knows of them, but it has its essence in them. ... It is not true what Hofmann testifies about himself: his systematics are not essentially the same as Augustine's scientificity; for it is not a matter of rigor or non-rigor in the scientific requirements, but of deriving and letting oneself unfold with necessity and disregarding Scripture, of which Augustine etc. did not know a word. Neither can his systematics be understood as a mere tightening of the method of earlier dogmatists, but it is a different kind from this; the earlier dogmatists have the empirical kind of systematic treatment, while v. Hofmann wants the speculative one."

The desire to have Luther as a protector has led the newer system-building theologians to say that the Reformer of the Church "genetically developed" the whole of Christian doctrine from the article of justification. So already Luthardt. However, "genetic development" in Luthardt's sense would place Luther among the system builders. Luthardt says:⁵⁶³⁾ " If dogmatics is to be the systematic exposition of the Christian faith, it must genetically develop the whole of Christian doctrine

563) [Compendium of Dogmatics](#) ¹¹ S. 30.

from a fundamental unity, i.e., it must not merely derive it from a supreme principle, but must dissect the facts of Christianity itself as they are summarized in principle. Luther describes the article on the righteousness of faith as such a genetic principle: 'In it David holds out to us the summa of the whole Christian doctrine and the clear loving sun which illuminates the Christian congregation. If this article is grasped and retained with certain and firm faith, the others gradually come and follow, as of the Trinity, etc.' W. W. Erl. *Exeg. opp. Lat.* XX, p. 193: *Stante enim hac doctrina stat ecclesia etc. Comm. in ep. ad Gal. II, 23, ed. Irmischer. Locus igitur iustificationis, ut saepe moneo, diligenter descendus est. In eo enim comprehenduntur omnes alii fidei nostrae articuli, eoque salvo salvi sunt et reliqui.* [Google] But the dogmatics that followed did not carry out this idea and designated only Scripture (in contrast to the Roman fundamental article of the infallibility of the pope; cf. Gerhard, *Conf. Cathol.* I, 2, 1- p. 71) *unicum principium cognoscendi*, from which the doctrines of faith were not only proved but developed." The opposition between Luther and "the following dogmatics" asserted here by Luthardt is a fiction. What Luther says of the central position of the doctrine of justification, namely, that this article contains the summa of the whole Christian doctrine, throws the right light on all other doctrines, and resists the intrusion of error in all other doctrines, etc., is also found in the Lutheran dogmatists, for example, in that they describe all other doctrines in their relationship to the article of justification as *articuli antecedentes* and *consequentes*.⁵⁶⁴ And what Luthardt ascribes to the dogmatists in contrast to Luther, that to them the Scriptures were *unicum principium cognoscendi*, from which the doctrines of faith were not only to be standardized but also to be taken directly, is also found throughout and even more powerfully in Luther. Luther knows absolutely no method of construction in theology, also no construction of the doctrines of faith from the central article of justification with the exception of the scriptural word. Luther says this not only in the numerous passages in which he rejects every "scripture-less" thought and advises every

564) Quenstedt, *Systema* I, 352 sqq, theses 6. 7. 8.

theologian to let all thoughts that have occurred to him "without scripture" in any doctrine fall out again as quickly as possible, but he also says this precisely where he compares Christian doctrine to a "golden chain" and to a "closed ring". This description of the Christian doctrine in Luther is always based on the assumption that every single link of the "golden chain" is given directly by the Word of Scripture. Indeed, Luther adds that anyone who denies any article of Christian doctrine thereby denies God in His Word and makes him a liar. Luther writes:⁵⁶⁵⁾ "It is certain that whoever does not believe or does not want to believe one article (after he has been admonished and taught), certainly does not believe one with seriousness and right faith. And whoever is so bold as to deny God or rebuke God in one word [of Scripture], and wilfully does so against and above that in which he has been admonished or instructed once or twice, may also (certainly does) deny God in all his words and rebuke him with lies. Therefore it is called, round and pure, all believed or nothing believed. The Holy Spirit (who is the whole Scriptures, III, 1890) cannot be separated nor divided, that he should teach or make believe one part true and the other false. Without where are the weak who are willing to be taught and not stiff-necked to contradict." Luther also knew exactly Hofmann's method of construction, whose peculiarity, as we have seen, consists in first constructing the doctrine from one's own inner being, carefully setting aside the Holy Scriptures, in order to then subsequently seek out the ego product in Scripture and adjust it according to Scripture. Thus, in the dispute over the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, Reformed sacrament enthusiasts also attributed to Luther the theological method of first putting the Scriptural words about the Lord's Supper completely out of sight, taking the doctrine of the Lord's Supper from "faith" and then "exposition" of the Scriptural words about the Lord's Supper. Luther expresses himself somewhat forcefully about this method of construction. He says:⁵⁶⁶⁾ "It is the arrogance of the afflicted devil who mocks us by such enthusiasts in this great matter, that he pretends to be instructed by Scripture so far as to put Scripture out of the way beforehand." Luther, for his part, insists,

565) [St. L. XX, 1781](#). 566) [St. L. XX, 780. 782](#).

that the doctrines of the Lord's Supper are not constructed from "faith" but are shown to be expressed in the scriptural words that deal with the Lord's Supper. "So this is the summa of it, that we have the clear, bare scripture for us, which is thus, 'Take, eat; this is my body.'" So also the Zwingli and Oecolampadius are to "bring up Scripture, which thus reads: 'This means my body' or: 'This is my body's sign.'" So completely far from Luther is all doctrine construction, setting aside the words of Scripture that deal with the individual doctrines. Luther's powerful "Sermon on the Armor and Weapons of Christians"⁵⁶⁷⁾ is, according to its main idea, a warning against any doctrinal construction, namely a warning against a "faith" that does not rest in all parts on the expressed word of Scripture. "We have sufficiently founded the articles of our faith in Scripture, so stop and do not let it be twisted with glosses and interpreted according to reason, as it rhymes or not." To the objection that not a unity but contradictions might emerge if one merely adheres to the words of Scripture, Luther answers: "Scripture will not be contrary to itself nor to some articles of faith, whether or not they are contrary to one another in your mind and do not rhyme." In short, according to Luther, Christian doctrine admittedly has "unity," but not a unity "in the head" of the dogmatizing human subject, according to the method of construction, but a unity grounded in the fact that Christian doctrine in all its parts is taken directly from Scripture, which is the Word of God and therefore not against itself, but completely uniform. "This has deceived the good man Oecolampadius, that Scripture, so [in his head] are contrary to each other, must of course be reconciled and one part take a mind that suffers itself with the other. ... But if they would consider beforehand and see how they would speak nothing but God's doctrine, as St. Peter teaches, and leave their saying and putting at home, they would not cause so much misfortune."⁵⁶⁸⁾

It should be mentioned that the formation of systems, which is adjusted to a "gapless", "contradictionless" unity or to a closed "logical whole", has also been criticized sharply in the present. It has been said that the whole

567) [St. L. IX, 810 ff.](#)

568) [St. L. XX, 798.](#)

system-building, which has been inoculated into the theology of the 19th century by the "reformer of the church of the 19th century", by Schleiermacher, is, strictly speaking, a sleight of hand. This system formation, which is on the line of Schleiermacher-Hofmann-Frank, etc., actually amounts to either completely deleting or at least reducing the incomprehensible, which cannot be separated from the Christian religion, in order to make the Christian faith acceptable to an unbelieving generation. This generally admired system formation has also been compared to the Procrustean bed. On the other hand, modern theologians have now recommended another way for the necessary salvation of the incomprehensible in Christianity. It must be recognized as a fact that everything that faith says in this eon in relation to Christian doctrine necessarily takes the form of the "irrational" or the "paradox". This sounds good and seems to stand in harmony with 1 Cor. 13:9: "Our knowledge (in this life is piecemeal, and our prophesying is piecemeal." But unless the proponents of the theology of the "irrational" return to Scripture as the Word of God and as the sole source and norm of theology, they determine the "irrational" or the super-rational found in Christianity not from Scripture but from the ego of the theologizing subject. Therefore, there is only a differently named form of human system formation. Subjectivism is not overcome, but remains in principle in force. The "Christian I" remains with the method of turning around its own axis. And let us not forget that this is the case with every form of subjectivism. As long as we put in the place of *sola gratia* self-determination, self-setting, self-decision, human behavior, *facultas se applicandi ad gratiam*, etc., and further: as long as we put in the place of *sola Scriptura* the "pious" self-consciousness, the religious experience, the religious cognition, the "faith," etc. of the theologizing subject, so long we remain — seen from the scientific character of our procedure — in the great circle of those who, as I said, move *οὐ κατ' ἐπίγνωσιν* around their own axis. And the result of this circular movement around one's own ego is uncertainty of salvation and uncertainty of truth. Hence

Luther's struggle for *sola gratia* and *sola Scriptura* against both Rome and Reformed zealotry. Hence the warning of the Formula of Concord against founding the Christian state by anything located in man himself (by "*aliquid in homine*"). Hence our own hot fight here in the United States against the Ego theology of the Reformed sects and against the Ego theology of synergism, which even under the Lutheran name demanded and still demands a right to exist. Christian certainty of salvation and Christian certainty of truth is only possible if we, with Luther, go "beyond ourselves" out of our ego or — what is the same thing — take a standpoint outside the world. This happens above only by remaining in accordance with the order established by Christ through faith in His (Christ's) Word, which we have in the Word of His apostles and prophets, in the Holy Scriptures.

20. Theology and method. [^](#)

If the question about the "dogmatic method" has the sense of where the theologian has to take the Christian doctrine from or which is the *principium cognoscendi* peculiar to theology, it is already clear from what has been said that every method, whatever it may call itself, is to be rejected which places another principle of knowledge next to Scripture, be it the church doctrine or the "faith consciousness" of the theologian or some other principle situated outside Scripture (*extra Scripturam*). What remains to be said here about "method" concerns primarily the question of the external grouping or order in which the doctrines present in Scripture can or should be presented for the purpose of teaching (*docendi causa*). We could have titled this section "Theology and the External Order of the Individual Doctrines of Scripture." However, we keep the term "method", because it was and still is customary to address especially the synthetic and analytical method, and following this, the necessary can be said about the importance, resp. unimportance of the grouping of the doctrines (within a *corpus doctrinae*).

Among the old Lutheran theologians, some advocate the synthetic, others the analytical method. While

Flacius means: *Theologia per synthesin commodissime traditur*,⁵⁶⁹⁾ Baier says quite certainly: *Partes theologiae revelatae iuxta ordinem analyticum collocandae sunt*⁵⁷⁰⁾ In general description, synthetic method is understood as the arrangement of thoughts or of the material to be treated, whereby we progress from the causes to the effects or compose the whole from the given components.⁵⁷¹⁾ The analytical method follows the opposite order. It goes back from the effects to the causes, or it seeks to derive the whole from a particular part, e.g., the final end (*finis*)."⁵⁷²⁾

Applied to theology, the synthetic method deals first with God as the origin, as of all things, so also of the salvation of man, then with the causes and means by which sinful man is led to salvation, and finally with the last things, concluding with eternal salvation. According to the analytic method, the last things, that is, the salvation of man, are dealt with first, and from there, after considering the man who is to be led to salvation, we go back to the causes and means (*Patris gratiosa voluntas, Filii redemptio, Spiritus Sancti gratia applicatrix, media gratiae*, etc.). The later theologians think that they should follow the analytical method, because theology is a practical skill in which one must first recognize the goal (*finis*: salvation), in order to then examine the object in which the goal is to be achieved (*subiectum operationis*, man) and finally conclude with the consideration of the causes and means by which the final goal is achieved in the *subiectum operationis*.⁵⁷³⁾

The synthetic method is generally followed by the dogmatists from Melanchthon to Gerhard inclusive, thus, to

569) *Clavis Scripturae*, 5th edition, from 1674, II, 56. Flacius also adds a table that shows how the individual doctrines stand according to the different methods.

570) *Compendium* [I, 76](#).

571) Flacius, *Clavis*, Jena 1674, p. 58.

572) Flacius, op. cit. [Baier-Walther I, 29](#).

573) Quenstedt I, 25.

name the main representatives of this period: Melanchthon,⁵⁷⁴⁾ Chemnitz,⁵⁷⁵⁾ Hutter,⁵⁷⁶⁾ Gerhard.⁵⁷⁷⁾ The Danish theologian Brochmand also belongs here.⁵⁷⁸⁾

We find the analytical method among the dogmatists a little before and then after the middle of the 17th century: among

574) *Loci Communes Rerum Theologicarum seu Hypotyposes Theologiae*, 1521. How in later editions (1535, 1543, especially 1548) the *sola gratia* was issued and Melanchthon became the father of synergism and majorism in the Lutheran Church is precisely stated by F. Bente in the *Concordia Triglotta*, "[Historical Introductions to the Symbolical Books](#)", pp. 128 ff. [Ed.- [see here](#), # 154. [The Father of Synergism](#).]

575) *Loci Theologici, ... quibus et Loci Communes D. Philippi Melancthonis perspicue explicantur et quasi integrum Christianae doctrinae corpus ecclesiae Dei sincere proponitur*. Edited after Chemnitz's death (1586) by Polykarp Leyser, 1591, Chemnitz's *Loci* are meant not only as an extension but also as a correction of later editions of Melanchthon's *Loci*. However, Chemnitz himself was not completely satisfied with his *Loci*, but thought of a new edition, for which, however, he could no longer find the time and strength. Chemnitz's theological mastery comes to full fruition in his [Examen Concilii Tridentini](#) and in his writing *De Duabus Naturis in Christo*, 1571.

576) *Loci Communes Theologici ex sacris literis diligenter eruti, veterum patrum testimoniis roborati et conformati ad methodum locorum Phil. Melancthonis*, 1619, also a kind of commentary on Melanchthon's *Loci* and also published by the Wittenberg faculty only after his death (1616). Hutter calls Melanchthon *magnum illum Germaniae nostrae Phoenicem, virum undique doctissimum deque re literaria universa praeclarissime meritum*. At the same time, Hutter points to the later Melanchthon's sad (*tristis*) apostasy from the pure doctrine, but not without adding the remark: *Haud tamen dubitamus, quin sub finem vitae seria acta poenitentia huius etiam peccati veniam a Christo et petiverit et impetrarit*. Hutter's *loci* offer students of theology in detail what is briefly summarized in his *Compendium Locorum Theologicorum* for Gymnasien.

577) *Loci Theologici cum pro adstruenda veritate, tum pro destruenda quorumvis contradicentium falsitate*. 1610-1621 in 9 volumes; supplement 1625. edition by Cotta (1762-1781) in 20 volumes, with two index volumes by G. H. Müller, 1787. 1789. edition by Ed. Preuß (Berlin 1863-1865, Leipzig 1875) in 9 volumes, with an index volume by Löbe after G. H. Müller, Leipzig 1885.

578) *Universae Theologiae Systema*, 1633; 6th edition published in Ulm in 1658. Walch rightly praises this work (*Bibliotheca Theol.* I, 67). His exposition: [quamvis haud diffitear, casus conscientiae haud apte ad theologiam dogmaticam relatos esse](#), is unjustified, because in a detailed exposition of Christian doctrine, answering questions of conscience is quite in order.

Dannhauer,⁵⁷⁹⁾ Friedrich König,⁵⁸⁰⁾ Calov,⁵⁸¹⁾ Quenstedt,⁵⁸²⁾ Baier,⁵⁸³⁾ Hollaz.⁵⁸⁴⁾ However, we find

579) *Hodosophia Christiana*, 1649. Dannhauer presents the Christian doctrine in 12 *phaenomena* in images taken from the Scriptures: Man a wanderer, Scripture the light, the Church the candlestick, God the goal, etc. The best edition is the one from 1713.

580) *Theologia Positiva Acroamatica*, 1664. Short guide to theological lectures, which also underlies Quenstedt's *Systema*.

581) *Systema Locorum Theologicorum*, 1655-1677, in 12 volumes. Carefully worked are the first, less carefully the last volumes. Calov is the most perceptive theologian of the 17th century. He is also a scriptural theologian, which Buddeus praises in him (*Isagoge Hist. Theol.*, 1730, p. 357). Even today, a classic exegetical work is Calov's *Biblia Illustrata*. Calov is judged spitefully and unjustly by Tholuck and downright reviled (RE.¹ II, 506). More justified assessment of Calov in RE.³, p. 653 f., by J. Kunze.

582) *Theologia Didactico-polemica sive Systema Theologiae*, 1686, 1696, 1702, 1716. Called by Tholuck "the accountant and scribe" of orthodox theology (RE.¹ XII, 421). The judgment does not apply factually because Quenstedt worked with his own judgment. In order to judge Quenstedt, one must have read him and compared him with other dogmatists. Also Walch's judgment (*Bibliotheca Theol.* I, 68), that of Quenstedt *meritissimi ecclesiae nostrae doctores ob leviolem dissensum* were counted among the opponents, is unjust. The synergism of Helmstedt and Musaeus is not *levior dissensus*. Walch is indifferentist and has also written too much. Even Tholuck, though he cannot quite suppress sneering remarks, describes Quenstedt as an unassuming, pious character without "bitter passion" (RET XII, 422). Walch also acknowledges that Quenstedt took much care with the scriptural evidence (loc. cit.).

583) *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*, 1686 u. oft. Baier is infected by Musaeus', his father-in-law's, synergistic point of view. The [St. Louis edition, 1879](#), is not a mere reprint of Baier's *Compendium*, but is so expanded by inserted quotations that it comprises three volumes (in all 1332 pages of large octavo). In the included quotations not only Luther and the old theologians, but also the newer theologians of the 19th century have their say, so that the students are offered a [source material](#), which enables them to judge both the old and the modern theology. Prof. Th. Bünger has provided an index of names and subjects for this edition of Walther's work, which has been done with excellent diligence and great expertise.

584) *Examen Theologicum Acroamaticum*, 1707. "The last genuine Lutheran dogmatist." Hollaz has not merely copied, but offers in his own presentation what has been taught from Luther on to his time within the Lutheran Church by its representatives. Following the analytical method, he brings the doctrine of eternal salvation already in the first part and concludes in the fourth part with the doctrines of the church, of the ministry, of the secular authorities and of the household. Hollaz is also rightly praised for having written a

significant differences in the position of individual doctrines among the enthusiasts of the analytical method. Baier, for example, treats the last things: death, resurrection, the Last Judgment and the end of the world, before the doctrine of sin and the redemption through Christ (namely, in immediate connection with *the finis theologiae ex parte hominis*, the salvation). Quenstedt, on the other hand, places these doctrines at the very end of his dogmatics.

As far as the judgment on the synthetic and analytic and any other method is concerned, it should not be forgotten that the external arrangement of the individual doctrines is of secondary importance as long as the content of the doctrines is not falsified. In theology, as Rudelbach has also correctly observed, ⁵⁸⁵ everything depends on the concept of divine revelation being held throughout, that is, on all doctrines being taken merely from Scripture and not somehow cut to size in adherence to the method of Procrustes according to the view or "faith" of the theologizing subject. In theology, any method is to be rejected which, setting aside the Scriptural word, seeks to invent anything, whether the method be called synthetic or analytical, scientific or practical or otherwise. In theology there is nothing to invent, neither as far as the content is concerned nor as far as the context of the doctrines is concerned. Therefore, only such a method is ever appropriate to theology, which in principle limits itself to putting together what already exists through the revelation of Scripture. This is done in the so-called local method, according to which is compiled in one place (hence the individual doctrines are appropriately called loci)

careful scriptural proof (Krakewitz in the preface to the *editio tertia*). Unhistorically, peculiarities are attributed to Hollaz that do not belong to him, e.g. the explanation about *the theologia irrogenitorum* (Wagenmann, RE.² VI, 266 f.). That only a born-again person can be called a theologian in the proper sense of the word has been abundantly taught by the "orthodox" from Luther on, as Hollaz himself proves (*Proleg.* I, qu. 18-21). Hollaz's remark (Hutterus Red. 10, p. 44) that Hollaz recognizes the "religious moment" only "by bringing it afterwards in pious sighs" is explained partly by Hollaz's extra-Christian point of view, partly by his bad habit of coining witty-sounding catchwords, with which he caused much mischief among the studying youth in the church of the 19th century. Most moderns also judge Hollaz quite differently. Cf. Wagenmann (op. cit.).

585) *Zeitschrift für luth. Theol. u. Kirche*, 1857, p. 382. Quoted in Baier-Walther I, 77.

what is revealed about a particular doctrine in all of Scripture. And this is the basic idea of the synthetic method. More recent theologians say that the dogmatists who follow the local method have cut the dogmatic material into matters and have not brought to view the interrelation and the progress of the system.⁵⁸⁶⁾ On the other hand, they consider the analytical method followed by later theologians to be more in line with science. Dorner says: "Georg Calixt established the analytical method, which soon found favor, even among his opponents, such as Calov, Dannhauer and Hülsemann. It [the analytic method] seeks to derive from a supreme truth, the highest good of mortal man, the individual dogmatic propositions as members and mediations of the supreme purpose. This supreme end is the salvation of man in the enjoyment of God."⁵⁸⁷⁾ It must be admitted that the analytical method corresponds formally more to the demands of modern theology, which sees its scientific character in the fact that the Christian doctrine is not taken from the Holy Scriptures, but is developed from the ego of the theologian. Thus the analytic method, applied to theology, gives the appearance, however, as if, instead of drawing from Scripture alone, it wanted to derive, that is, find, the Christian doctrines by reasoning from the final purpose. Walther used to say in lectures: "The analytical method seeks to find the thing, as it were. But in theology we cannot infer the means from the end." To the credit of later theologians, however, it must be said that they mostly follow the analytic method only outwardly, that is, use this method only for the outward grouping of doctrines, but in fact hold fast to the Scripture Principle in the exposition of the individual doctrines. As Baier (I, 79) expressly emphasizes: *Finis cognitio ex revelatione divina petita natura prior est cognitione mediorum itidem ex divina revelatione petita.* Kirn, therefore, does not want to allow any distinction even among the "Old Protestant" dogmatists, because they hold the Scripture Principle. He says: "Old Protestant dogmatics, despite the alternating preference for the synthetic and analytic arrangement, proceeds according to an

586 Thus Dorner, *Geschichte der protestantischen Theologie*, p. 531.

587) Op. cit.

essentially uniform method. This can be briefly described as the method of formal [?] scriptural authority. It consists in the fact that the individual biblical statements, understood as doctrinal revelation ... directly determine the content and form of the dogmatic propositions. Its support is found in the theory [?] of the verbal inspiration of Scripture."⁵⁸⁸⁾

Kirn rightly says that the unified method of old Protestant dogmatics finds its support in the verbal inspiration of Scripture. The old dogmatists would not have held so strongly to *sola Scriptura* — even against dissenters in their own midst, e.g. against Calixt's *Consensus quinquesaecularis* — if they had not been convinced that the Holy Scriptures are the inspired Word of God. Now because verbal inspiration is not, as Kirn thinks, a "theory," that is, not an intemperate private view of the old Protestant dogmatists, but the authoritative view of Christ and His apostles, it serves the urgent need for clarity in theological teaching if we divide the Protestant theologians of the present day into two classes according to their principled position on Holy Scriptures. We do not ask whether they follow the synthetic or analytic method, nor whether within these methods they use incidentally the definitional or causal method, or both. Rather, we ask all theologians, regardless of the country in which they live, whether they still consider the Holy Scriptures to be the Word of God and want to draw and standardize Christian doctrine from them alone, or whether they have already become so "modern" that they no longer consider the Scriptures to be the Word of God and the only source and standard of theology, but have set out to offer the Christian church an ego product. With the former, understanding is possible, even with errors present. With the latter, understanding is impossible because of the lack of common ground. *Contra principium negantem disputari non potest*. In this we can credit to love certain modern theologians who have departed from the Scripture Principle what they inconsistently leave standing of the Christian doctrine. At the same time, however, it is our duty to always emphatically remind students that all theologians who have abandoned the Scriptural principle belong in one

588) *Grundriß der ev. Dogmatik*³, p. 4.

class. We would unnecessarily burden the theological study and at the same time have a confusing effect if we wanted to present to the students as theologically important, for example, that a certain theologian who has in principle renounced Scripture as Word of God and wants to deliver an ego product is determined more to the left by Ritschl or more to the right by Frank.

In order to push the Christian church away from the scriptural method and to adjust it to the ego method, modern theology raises the objection that the theologian does not even know where to begin in presenting the Christian doctrine from the scriptures. We have already seen that Frank, for example, argues in this way. Ihmels also argues in the same way when he says:⁵⁸⁹⁾ "It [dogmatics] must not be content with merely compiling the biblical doctrinal statements. Without further ado, it would also have to be made clear to someone who was still so inclined to such a view that the question would already have to embarrass him at which point he now had to begin with the presentation of the statements of Scripture and how he had to link them." This would be a fatal situation, however, if those who only accept the Scripture Principle wanted to or should write dogmatics, but did not know where to begin. Without a beginning in dogmatics there would also be no middle of dogmatics and no end of dogmatics. In short, all those who hold to the Scripture Principle in dogmatics would indeed be minus dogmatics. At least they should be "by right" without dogmatics. Against this we refer first to the fact that in Luther and the old theologians, although they adhere tenaciously to the Scripture Principle, we perceive no "embarrassment" at all about the beginning. As is well known, Luther recounts his faith "piece by piece" "before God and all the world" at the end of his writing "Confession of the Supper of Christ" (1528).⁵⁹⁰⁾ He begins with the "high article of the divine majesty, that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three distinct persons, one right some, natural, true God," that is, with the article of the Trinity. Then follow the articles of the person of Christ, of the work of Christ, of sin, of justification (by faith in Christ as opposed to all works doctrine), of the

589) From the church, its doctrines and life under the section "Issue and meaning of dogmatics," p. 121.

590) [St. L. XX, 1094 ff.](#)

Means of Grace, Of the Church. The article on the resurrection of the dead concludes the book. The joyful and confident way in which Luther confesses his faith "piece by piece" does not give rise to the thought that Luther was at a loss for a starting point. In his catechisms, Large and Small, Luther has a different starting point. He does not begin with the article of the Trinity, but with the Ten Commandments, that is, with the Law. But again, we do not see any embarrassment about the starting point. In the ancient dogmatists, because they follow partly the synthetic and partly the analytical method, we find even opposite starting points. Flacius, in characterizing the synthetic and the analytic method, says quite correctly: *Methodus analytica prorsus contrarium cursum et ordinem synthesisi tenet. Haec [the analytic method] incipit, ubi illa [the synthetic method] desiit, et contra, ibi desinit, ubi illa inceperat.* And although Flacius prefers the synthetic to the analytic method, he still wants both to grow side by side: *Licet theologia commodissime per synthesisin tradatur, tamen et analyticam methodum aliquo modo recipere posset, ut adiuncta tabula testatur. Finis enim theologiae, de quo nos miseri homines maxime angimur, est vita aeterna, sicut ille [the rich young man] ex Christo quaerit, Matt. 19:16.⁵⁹¹* So also we will not dare to deny the dogmatic right to exist to one or the other part because of the different grouping of the individual doctrines. The reason for this is that both parts, as Kirn admits, "follow an essentially uniform method" despite the different starting points, namely, they take the individual doctrines from Scripture. In fact, with regard to the starting point in the exposition of Christian doctrine, it stands that we can begin in the front or in the back or even in the middle. If the beginning is made from the Scriptures and we stay with the Scriptures, we always come very soon to *medias res*, to the center of the Christian doctrine, namely to the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins through faith in the incarnate Son of God, who is the propitiation for our sin and the sin of the whole world. The reason for this lies in the solid inner unity that is inherent in the theology taken from Scripture. We could start with the eternity, with the eternal

591) *Clavis* II, 58.

Gospel of Christ, which was hidden from the world, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by command of the eternal God to establish the obedience of faith among all the heathen,⁵⁹²⁾ as John begins both his gospel and his first epistle from the eternal Son of God, who appeared in time, and from here soon arrives at the center, namely at the forgiveness of sins through faith in the blood and death of the Son of God. We could also begin with the eternity that follows this temporality for us men, namely with the eternal salvation of those who have come out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made their garments clear in the blood of the Lamb.⁵⁹³⁾ Here, too, it is not difficult to follow what the Scriptures teach about man and his misery of sin, as well as about the redemption that came through Christ, and about the appropriation of the redemption that has taken place. We could also start in the middle, for example with the sermon of the angel in the field near Bethlehem: "Do not be afraid! Behold, I proclaim unto you great joy, which shall be to all people: for unto you is born this day a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."⁵⁹⁴⁾ Going backward and forward from here, we could connect what the Scriptures teach of man's killing guilt of sin and of God's saving grace. In short, one can start at various points in the exposition of Christian doctrine without mischief, provided one begins, continues, and ends with Scripture. Only one starting point is sinister and forbidden within the Christian Church. The starting point of theology must not be "the religious experience", "the pious self-consciousness of the theologizing subject", the subject that rejects the Holy Scriptures as God's infallible Word and therefore what it teaches, not from the Scriptures, but from its own subject, in contradiction with Christ's instruction to remain with His Word, and in contradiction with the judgment of His Apostle, who withdraws the *licentia docendi* from any teacher who does not remain with the sound words of Christ, because such a one suffers from conceit and ignorance. Ihmels also wants to protect this starting point, which is forbidden in Scripture, as the only

592) Rom. 16:25. 26.

593) Rev. 7:14-17; Matt. 25:34.

594) Luke 2:10, 11.

possible one when he says: "Even if the Scripture wanted to give a uniform whole of doctrine [wanted? the Scripture wants to be "uniformly" the Word of God⁵⁹⁵] and it would be possible for dogmatics to reproduce only this whole of doctrine, one could not calm down in dogmatics because dogmatics basically wants to represent the knowledge of faith." Certainly, dogmatics basically wants to present the knowledge of faith, but the knowledge of faith that remains in Christ's word, in the word of the apostles and prophets, in the word of Scripture, that always testifies only *vis-à-vis* the word of Scripture. Faith without the Word of Scripture is faith "in the air", not faith that says: "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth!" but unbelief that does not believe the testimony that God has testified of His Son, and therefore makes God a liar in His Word.⁵⁹⁶

Perhaps herewith the necessary is said about the external grouping of the Christian doctrines within a *corpus doctrinae*. Following this, we will review the nature of modern theology, insofar as it acts from its point of view as an accuser against all representatives of scriptural theology.

The Christian church of our time must not conceal from itself that it has in the modern theologians, who instead of teaching from Scripture alone want to teach from their own consciousness, a hostile power in its own midst, which is bent on pushing it, the Christian church, away from the Word of Scripture and thus from the foundation of its faith. This hostility to the Scripture Principle is also clearly discerned from the criticisms leveled by modern theology against the persons and writings of the ancient theologians who held to the Scripture Principle. This criticism is also extended to the persons and writings of such theologians of our time who also hold to *sola Scriptura*. They are registered, as we have already seen in another context, as "repristination theologians." The church fellowship from which this dogmatic is written, the Missouri Synod, also falls under this criticism. Other synods in this country and in other countries that stand in church fellowship with the Missouri Synod,

595) θεόπνευτος 2 Tim. 3:16; τα λόγια του Θεοῦ, Rom. 3:2; ον δυνάται λνθῆναι, Jn. 10:35; Old and New Testament "unified" Holy Spirit word, 1 Petr. 1:10-12.

596) 1 John 5:9, 10.

are subjected to the same criticism. "Criticism" is a mild term. Criticism actually takes the form of decisive accusations. We believe that we should make special reference to this here, although the matter has already been dealt with many times in other connections. The theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are openly accused of having taken the Holy Scriptures for the Word of God, or, as it is more frequently expressed, of having "identified" Scripture and the Word of God. We read, "The fault ... lies in the defective or lacking distinction between the Bible and the Word of God." ⁵⁹⁷⁾ "Perfected was the doctrine of inspiration by the Protestant scholastics of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries since the example given by Johann Gerhard as early as 1610 in *Locus de Scriptura* and continued in 1625 in *Exegesis Ueberior Loci de Scriptura*. It was believed that the Catholics, the Socinians, the Arminians and other parties could be fought victoriously only. if the divine prestige of Scripture was extended to the letter [to the words of Scripture]. The Bible was ... a divine religious textbook." ⁵⁹⁸⁾ A second charge, related to the foregoing general accusation, is to the effect that the ancient theologians, because they taught only from and according to Scripture, had exercised a pernicious influence on the Christian Church. They would have promoted "intellectualism," dead intellectual Christianity. "Living" Christianity could only be achieved by doctrines from the "Christian experience" or the "pious self-consciousness" of the theologizing individual. That Ihmels also raises the charge against the first church as well as against Luther and the Reformation period, as well as against the old dogmatists, that they promoted "intellectualism" because they appealed directly to Scripture, has already been explained in more detail above.⁵⁹⁹⁾ Another accusation is that among the old theologians from Luther on up to Hollaz inclusive there is almost no disagreement in doctrines. For this and nothing else is the meaning of the accusation that the individual dogmatists lack "independent reproduction" of the Christian doctrine. They would have looked at the matter as if "in terms of content" nothing more could be changed in the traditional doctrine of faith, and progress could be made only in a more certain conceptual

597) [Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 245.](#)

598) [op. cit. p. 249.](#)

599) Under the section "The closer description of theology, conceived as doctrines," 70 ff.

formulation of inviolable statutes". The new version of the statutes is also "almost non-existent" in Quenstedt. In Quenstedt, too, new things are found "almost not at all".⁶⁰⁰ We can understand that this lack of disunity alienates modern theology. After all, it perceives in its own midst a "sheer endless abundance of diversities," having agreed on a "uniform method," namely, the method of drawing Christian doctrine not from the one Holy Scriptures but from the "religious experience" of the many theologizing individuals. Even the positive among the experiential theologians regard agreement in Christian doctrine as an abnormality. "Pure doctrine" is introduced with a "so-called." Therefore, however, it is understandable that the fact of the "essential agreement" of the ancient theologians for two centuries seems uncanny to the modern theologians. Therefore they search and find also an explanation for this fact. But their explanation is historically incorrect. Namely, they claim that the ancient dogmatists were guilty of "dogmatic exegesis" in general, interpreting Scripture according to the "church doctrinal concept," especially according to the Formula of Concord. Not only is Quenstedt denied "sound scriptural research," but Chemnitz is also said to have interpreted Melancthon's *loci* "according to the canon of the Formula of Concord." The same false accusation is leveled by the great majority of recent theologians against the whole of "Old Protestant dogmatics."⁶⁰¹ We put here what we have stated in more detail elsewhere⁶⁰² : "It must be called a myth, which goes unchecked from mouth to mouth, that the Lutheran dogmatists were people who actually registered dogmas only according to the doctrinal tradition and according to the guidance of the symbols, but cared little for the proof of Scripture and the elevation of the doctrine from Scripture. Whoever has taken the trouble to get to know the great dogmatists, e.g. Gerhard, Quenstedt, Calov, only to some extent — already the examination of even one locus would suffice — will be of a completely different opinion. With Gerhard, the exposition of the doctrines from Scripture is the beginning, middle and end. The scriptural passages, which the false teachers cite for themselves

600) [Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 26](#) ff.

601) [Kim, Grundriß 3, p. 4](#). [Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 25](#) ff. Dorner, Geschichte der protestantischen Theologie, p. 559. Gaß, Geschichte der protestantischen Dogmatik I, 338.

602) *Zur Einigung der amerikanisch-lutherischen Kirche* 2, p. 654.[sic:, page # is [actually p. 65](#); [Conversion and Election, p. 90](#) f.].

are treated in such detail by Gerhard according to the context in which they stand and according to the use of language that too much rather than too little has been done to the matter. Quenstedt, whom one has called the great 'accountant of Lutheran theology,' offers in his great dogmatic work in the notes to the θέσις and under the sections βεβαιώσεις and ἐκδίκησις [Ed.-- refutation] chiefly scriptural exposition. That Calov was a great scriptural theologian is evident not only from his '*Biblia Illustrata*' but from all his major writings. Calov was also the one who repeatedly inculcated in the students of theology that the knowledge of Hebrew and Greek was much more necessary for them than the study of the Fathers and the Scholastics.⁶⁰³⁾ In Meusel's *Lexicon*, someone writes aptly against the popular disparagement of the old theologians as scriptural theologians: 'The proof of Scripture occupies a prominent place and wide space in the old Lutheran dogmatics. Especially the authors of the *Loci*, but also those of the later *Systemata*, are serious about the Holy Scriptures not merely as a subsequent standard of doctrine drawn from elsewhere, but as their principal source, and they raise from it the dogmatic truths, which they justify logically and defend against the objections of the opponents, so that, for example, the dogmatic works of Chemnitz and Johann Gerhard are at the same time a treasure trove of the most thorough exegetical discussions.'" ⁶⁰⁴⁾ The home of "dogmatic exegesis" is not to be found with the theology of the 16th and 17th centuries, as the accusation reads, but is found with the accuser, in the camp of modern theology. This theology, after all, resolutely refuses to let its faith arise and be standardized by the doctrines of Scripture. That would be, according to its own explicit explanation, "intellectualistic" use of Scripture. Rather, it wants to interpret and standardize Scripture according to its own view, according to the pious self-consciousness of the theologizing subject. This is truly "dogmatic exegesis" in the eminent sense of the word. And from this eminently dogmatic exegesis is also easily and unceremoniously explained "the sheer endless abundance" of doctrinal differences, which modern theology nevertheless

603) Calov, *Theol. Antisyncretistica*, th. 4: *Theologiae studioso longe magis necessaria est linguae Hebraicae et Graecae notitia quam theologiae scholasticae aut patrum studium aut philosophiae.*

604) *Sub voce* "Scriptural Evidence" VI, 93.

faces with a somewhat embarrassed face despite the occasional expressions of joy about "the multiplicity of the individualities of faith". The fact that in the period from Luther to Hollaz, on the other hand, there is a lack of doctrinal diversity can be easily explained by the fact that Kirn told us when he said that he was embarrassed by the diversity of doctrinal differences. That, on the other hand, in the period from Luther to Hollaz there is a lack of the missed abundance of doctrinal differences is easily and unceremoniously explained by the fact to which Kirn drew our attention when he said that "Old Protestant dogmatics, despite the alternating preference for the synthetic and the analytic method, proceeds according to an essentially uniform method," namely, the method of taking Christian doctrine from Holy Scriptures. This unified method naturally yields a unified result, *scil.* unity in doctrines. God has arranged the Holy Scriptures in such a way that the knowledge of the truth is not only possible, but the straying from the truth is excluded, as long as we stay with the words of the Scriptures, as Christ testifies very clearly when he promises us the knowledge of the truth in John 8, if we stay with his words. — So much here about the apostasy criticism that modern theology makes of the persons and writings of the old Lutheran dogmatists.

The condemnatory criticism that modern theology makes of the old Protestant theology from Luther to Hollaz is consequently extended to the theologians and church fellowships of the present day who still hold the Scriptures to be the Word of God and therefore also insist that Christian doctrine be taken and judged from Scripture alone. The criticism is all the more severe because it is bound up with the fear that Scripture would again be taken for God's Word in the church of the present day, and thus the theology of pious self-consciousness would be set off course. On the one hand, modern theology, as we have heard repeatedly, uses very confident language. For example, "Dogmatic method is relatively uniform nowadays." "No one bases his dogmatics in the old Protestant manner on the *norma normans*, the Bible." "In the present day, the orthodox doctrine of inspiration has little dogmatic significance." The few theologians who still advocate it are "stragglers," "their number is small, their efforts fruitless, their displeasure with the comrades who are paving the way anew to the forefront, unimpressive." On the other hand, however, there is no lack of expressions of fear that what has been thoroughly dismissed and is lying on the ground might awaken to new life. Thus it is said of the few theologians who, as "latecomers,"

make no impression on their peers that they are "not without danger to the church." Quite recently, [Horst Stephan](#) also calms the modern-theological camp first with the assurance: "Today the doctrine of inspiration has been abandoned by scientific theology," but he adds: "It only continues to have a powerful effect in lay orthodoxy . . . still strongly lingers." ⁶⁰⁵⁾ So there is a fear of a reaction from lay circles. In the latest issue of the "Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift" (New Church Publication)⁶⁰⁶⁾ an article writer reckons with the possibility that in the present time "in a similar way the retreat to an unevangelical standpoint of authority is being carried out [meaning the retreat to Scripture as the Word of God], as can be perceived in the repristination theology of the first half of the 19th century." At the same time, we see from these expressions of fear that modern theology has lost Christian insight to the extent that it considers the return to Scripture as the Word of God a calamity to be fought with might.⁶⁰⁷⁾

We should not be surprised, therefore, that especially the American Lutherans, who hold to the Scripture Principle and consequently are also united in Christian doctrine, are considered a less desirable part of the Christian church and are relegated to the background as representatives of "Repristination Theology". This criticism applies especially to the Missouri Synod and its writings. Dr. Walther, to whom, however, the leading role among the fathers of the Missouri Synod is rightly attributed, appears in Zöckler's "Handbuch der theologischen Wissenschaften" as a curiosity next to Kohlbrügge, Gaußen and Kuyper, because he teaches the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures "in the old orthodox sense".⁶⁰⁸⁾ Walther is counted among the class of 19th century "repristination theologians." Others have called him a "theologian of quotations," implying — though not always — that he was not to be classified as a theologian of Scripture.

605) [Glaubenslehre, 1921, p. 52.](#)

606) *Neue Kirchl. publication*, 1923, p. 110.

607) The above-mentioned article in the "Neue Kirchl. Zeitschrift" also provides evidence for this. It is considered as a striving for reprehensible theology of repristination that — according to a report by Ebrard — in the middle of the thirties of the last century at the University of Erlangen the Lutheran students of theology acquired the symbolic books already in the first year of study.

608) *Manual 2 III*, 149.

Walther has been both severely rebuked and praised, albeit with qualification, in the United States as well as in Germany and other countries.⁶⁰⁹ His name appears in dogmatic textbooks up to this time, and also for the purpose of characterizing at the same time the theological nature and church position of the Missouri Synod. If we are to summarize our own judgment of Walther, we would like to call him the apologist of Luther's theology of Scripture and of the theology of Scripture of the Old Protestant dogmatists, insofar as the latter have proved to be genuine representatives of Luther's theology of Scripture. Thus Walther becomes at the same time the apologist of the theologians of the present day, who are brought under the designation of "repristination theologians" because, as far as the scriptural method is concerned, they walk in the paths of the old Lutheran theologians. The charges leveled by modern theology against Luther and the old Protestant dogmatists up to Hollaz are, as we have seen, lack of scientific sense in the apprehension of theological problems, mechanical use of Scripture by direct appeal to the "It is written," spread of intellectualism, unquestioning adoption of traditional doctrines, and so on. All these charges are eviscerated by Walther in detail and proven to be factually false charges. And this is done not only theoretically, but also practically. Walther freely and openly confesses: We American Lutherans walk in the paths of Luther and the old theologians which you fight against. But come to us and examine the result before your eyes. Go through our congregations, attend our pastoral conferences and our Synod conventions, and then ask yourselves whether what you have heard and seen really bears the character of mere sanity Christianity and mere repristination theology. To the great multitude of accusers, the defender should be given the floor in regard to the main points of accusation. Walther dealt with these points in detail in the preface to "Lehre und Wehre" of 1875. As far as the position of the Christian Church toward science is concerned, Walther takes the position of which science it must zealously cultivate and which science it must close the door to according to God's will. The science which the church has to cultivate

609) RE.² IX, 85; XVIII, 687 ff.

and must be regarded as a great gift of God, is the training in all worldly knowledge which the church needs as an external apparatus for the direction of its calling in the world, for the teaching and preaching of the gospel. This includes what serves the general training of the mind; in general, what is usually summarized under humanistic education. In particular, Walther urges with Luther the study of history [Ed.- ? **"humanities" in English edition**], the classical languages and for theologians "in full equipment" the study of the original languages of the Holy Scriptures. He says: "The spirit of Carlstadt, the Anabaptists and other enthusiasts who despise science as something useless, even dangerous and carnal, and instead boast of the inspirations of the 'spirit' has no place among us. We are not of the opinion that the church should flee into the desert, sit down on the isolation stool for the sake of its self-preservation, close itself off from the unbelieving world, let the enemies outside it, abandon and let pass away the anti-religious educated, to whom the gospel can only be brought in a certain form, and address itself only to the uneducated people. No; we recognize it as our sacred duty to become all things to all people, so that we may save some everywhere. We heartily agree with Melanchthon when he once wrote: 'An Iliad of evils is an unlearned theology'. (*Corpus Ref.* XI, 278.)" Walther points out the seriousness with which Luther urged education in all the "liberal arts" as useful to all estates, and adds, "How could we call ourselves even Lutherans, or even just Christians, if we were despisers of science?"

Of course, Walther speaks in particular detail, according to the circumstances of the time, about the sense in which science should not be allowed a home in the church. He writes: "We do not want to know anything about a science that wants to play the mistress and master of the Scriptures, instead of only helping to find the truth contained in the Scriptures, wants to sit in judgment over them and correct them from itself, which, instead of remaining in its sphere, wants to raise the laws that happen to be valid in its field to general ones and impose them also on the field of Scripture. Such μετάβασις εις άλλο γένος we consider as idoltrous as unscientific. We agree entirely with Melanchthon when

he writes: 'As it would be madness to say that one can judge the Christian doctrine from the rules of the shoemaker's trade, so they err who ascribe to philosophy a judgment about the same'. (*Scholia in epist. ad Col.*, p. 68.) No matter how confident science may claim that the results of its research are absolutely certain truths, we do not consider them, but rather the Scriptures, to be infallible. If the results of scientific research contradict clear Scripture, we are certain from the outset that they are nothing but certain error, even if we are not able to prove it as such other than by calling on Scripture. Therefore, whenever we have to choose between science and Scripture, we say with Christ our Lord: 'Scripture cannot be broken' John 10:35, and with the holy apostle: 'We take all reason captive to the obedience of Christ' 2 Cor. 10:5. We do not wait for science to conquer our reason first. We already have it, and it stands before all scientific investigation or examination as firmly as our God who took it. Whatever science may bring to light, it neither gives us faith nor takes it away. We stand on a rock of which we know that not even the gates of hell, let alone human science, can overpower it, and therefore laugh at all enemies and their scientific battering rams and wall-breakers with which they bury the sky-high rock rising from the raging waters of the world with mad fury. For thus saith the Lord, 'Whosoever shall fall upon this rock shall be dashed to pieces; but upon whomsoever it shall fall, it shall crush him,' Matt. 21:44."

Walther also exposes the abuse that modern theology makes of the so-called reborn ego or enlightened reason. He says: "Through enlightenment, reason does not receive its own light besides the Scriptures; rather, its enlightenment consists precisely in the fact that, through the action of the Holy Spirit, the word of the prophets and apostles has become its only light in matters of faith. ... Insofar as it wants to dispute from its principles against the articles of faith, insofar it is not born again, because the born again reason disputes from the principles of the Word of God." Walther also urgently warns the Christian church against the opinion that its doctrines can be developed further by the means of modern science.

He justifies this warning thus: "We consider the Holy Scriptures to be so clear with regard to the objects of our faith that we do not remotely hope that a new article of faith, hitherto unknown and closed to the Church, will be opened up to us or has already been opened up to us by the newer greater scientific aids. We do not believe in a growth of the Church in knowledge through the gradual emergence of dogmas. Rather, we believe that the Church of the first century was already in possession of all those dogmas that are truly biblical dogmas. We do not consider the apostolic church to be the church in its infancy, which only gradually ripens into manhood through the work of scientifically educated theologians; rather, we are firmly convinced that the church, with regard to the clarity and purity of its knowledge, is like the moon, which soon wanes, soon waxes again, and even experiences sad eclipses at times. We renounce not only such ingredients of science to theology, which virtually contradict the biblical truth, but in short, everything that is supposed to supplement our biblical theology; for God forbids not only to oppose His word, but just as strictly to add to it, Deut. 12:32."

Walther comments on the reconciliation (synthesis) between theology and science that is strived for in our time: "As certain as we are that a real contradiction between Christian theology and true science, science *in abstracto*, does not and cannot take place, we do not consider it at all the task of a theologian nor possible to ever reconcile our biblical theology and science as it exists in *concreto*. The reproach that is raised against us, that we do not try to lead the present generation, which is sunk in unbelief, back to faith also in our part, by showing the world the harmony of Christian faith and science, this reproach is well-founded; but we do not regard it as a reproach, but rather as a glory, which we never want to be taken away by God's grace. For we are firmly assured that even the present apostate world cannot be helped by the lie that divine revealed truth stands in the most beautiful harmony with the wisdom of this world, but only by it.

preaching to it the divine foolishness, the old unchanged gospel, of which Paul and the history of the church of all times and of every individual Christian testify that it is a power of God which makes blessed all who believe in it, the Jews in particular and also the Greeks. A man who is won to Christianity by being shown how Christianity can stand the severest test of science is not yet won, his faith is not yet faith."

To refute the charge that the return to the theology of Luther and the dogmatists "implies a slavish submission to the doctrinal decisions of the dogmatists or of Luther or of the symbols, Walther issues the following general invitation: "Come and see! Go from parish to parish and from church to church in our fellowship and see whether there is a so-called dead orthodoxism and not rather a living experiential knowledge that has matured under inner struggles! Visit our pastoral conferences, which are held regularly between our annual Synod conventions, and see whether there is that business spirit which regards ministry as a trade for earning a living, and whether there is not rather a lively theological life and concern to know how a servant of Christ should walk in the house of God, which is the congregation of the living God. Take part in our Synod conventions and see if there is an *iurare in verba magistri* and not rather that sense of Luther: 'Unless I am overcome and convicted with testimonies of the Holy Scriptures or with public, clear and bright reasons and causes, I cannot and will not retract anything.'" — About the "citation theology", which has been attributed to Walther especially because of his writing "The Voice of Our Church in the Question of Church and Ministry"⁶¹⁰), he himself speaks thus: "When we Lutherans of America unfurled again the old good banner of our church and gathered around it again in closed ranks, while around us Zwinglianism, enthusiasm and rationalism sailed under the Lutheran flag, then it was immediately said: again a new sect! Some called out: You are on the road to Rome! You are Unionists! still others: You are Independents! Still others: You are pietists, enthusiasts,

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610) First edition [1852](#), ³ [1874](#) [1875].

Donatists, Calvinists! — and who may name all the sects that should have risen again and become new with us? In short, we were to be everything, but not what we ourselves declared to want to be: confessors of the doctrines of the Reformation, Lutherans. What could and had we to do now, if we did not want to be labeled a sect? As long as we were denied the character of being faithful Lutherans, we had to continue to call upon the dear confession and the old, undisputedly faithful teachers of our church to stand up for us as our witnesses. And we think we have done it in such a way that whoever would but see it must see it, that we have not followed those faithful teachers of our church blindly, but in living conviction, are not their mindless followers and copycats, but their sons, so that we have always been able to say, 'I believe, therefore I speak.'" — To the charge that the American Lutheran Church has substituted symbols for Scripture, or interpreted Scripture according to symbols, or practiced "symbololatry," Walther replies, "As incomparably valuable as the pure confession of our church has been to us above all, we ourselves have never submitted to it as a doctrinal law imposed upon us, but have rather accepted it with joyful thanksgiving to God for His unspeakable grace solely because we have found in it our own confession. Our American Lutheran Church has also had to fight many a hard battle with the proud sects here, against whom we naturally could not hold the testimony of our fathers, and whoever has been a witness to these battles knows that God's written Word has proved a victorious weapon even in our weak hands." — About the valuation of the old dogmatists Walther expresses himself thus: "By the way, those do not know us who call our theology that of the 17th century. As highly as we esteem the immense work done by the great Lutheran dogmatists of that period, it is not really they to whom we have returned, but above all our dear Concordia and Luther, in whom we have recognized the man whom God has chosen to be the Moses of His Church of the New Covenant, to lead out of it His Church which has fallen into the bondage of the anti-Christian, the pillar of smoke and fire of the golden and pure Word of God in front. The dogmatics of that time, however immeasurably rich treasures of knowledge and experience are stored up in them,

so that we learn from them with pleasure and joy day and night, are neither our Bible nor our confession, but rather we already perceive in them here and there a turbidity of that stream which gushed forth so crystalline in the 16th century. Also in more recent theological writings we find the notice that Baier's *Compendium Theologiae Positivae* of Walther has been republished in St. Louis. This has probably given rise to the opinion among some as if the old dogmatists and especially Baier had been regarded by Walther and in general within the Missouri Synod as the actual "standard theologians." Thus, for example, we read in [Nitzsch-Stephan](#)⁶¹¹⁾ the note: "Baier wrote the *Compendium Theologiae Positivae* (1686), which summarizes the mild orthodoxy of Musaeus; it spread exceedingly rapidly and widely and still conveys the old Protestant dogmatics to the newly orthodox Lutherans (!), especially of America: newly published Preuß, Berlin 1864, and by Walther, St. Louis 1879 ff." We have already noted above⁶¹²⁾ that Walther's edition is not a mere reprint of Baier's *Compendium*, but has been expanded into an entirely new book by the insertion of copious and often very detailed quotations. In the inserted quotations, not only Luther and the representatives of Old Protestant dogmatics, but also the main representatives of 19th century dogmatics have their say. The purpose of Walther's edition, as has already been noted, is to provide students of theology with the richest possible source material, which will enable them to orient themselves about the state of theology in the past and in the present. [Walther](#) writes about this: "We [American Lutherans] seek to obtain for ourselves an exact knowledge of what is at present written against Christian truth, and do not conceal the attacks of the present with their specious apparatus even from our studying youth, convinced that he who has thoroughly and vividly known the truth possesses therein the sure preservative against infection even with the most apparent error."⁶¹³⁾ A part of the quotations that Walther has added to his edition of Baier are also meant as

611) [Lehrbuch der ev. Dogmatik, 3rd edition, edited by Horst Stephan 1912, p. 29.](#)

612) P. 175, footnote 583.

613) [L. u. W. 1875, p. 68.](#)

corrections of Baier's text. As far as "the mild orthodoxy of Musaeus" is concerned, which is ascribed to Baier by Nitzsch-Stephan and which shows itself in particular in synergistic ways of speech of Baier, Walther used to excuse with the fact that Baier was Musaeus' son-in-law.⁶¹⁴⁾

In the foregoing, Walther's words describe the ecclesiastical condition of our American Lutheran Church, which is said to have fallen into a mere "Repristination Theology" together with a "mechanical view of Scripture" and "dead orthodoxy". The author of this dogmatic could not help but be convinced of this, because he had the opportunity to attend hundreds of congregational meetings, pastoral conferences and Synod conventions during a period of more than forty years. It is self-evident in the *ecclesia militans* that during all this time weaknesses and infirmities have more or less always come to light and are still coming to light. We would like to point out one more point which refers to the unity in doctrines. This complete agreement in doctrine has caused offense in this country and also in Germany, and has often been commented on rather unobjectively and even presented as the result of bowing to the authority of one man. Nothing can be more perverse. We still knew most of the fathers of the Synod personally. They were not only fundamentally different, but in part also very strong and independent characters, so that, to speak humanly, one might have expected that they would very soon diverge in different directions. That this did not happen has appeared to us the longer, the more as a testimony to the unifying power of the Word of God. Even the different political views at the time of the American Civil War, which became strongly noticeable here and there and also emerged in public meetings, could not destroy the unity of faith based on the Scriptures through the action of the Holy Spirit. People called out to one another, "Politics has not brought us together, neither shall it drive us apart."

It might not seem quite appropriate that the church situation in our American Lutheran Church should be described in some detail in a dogmatic writing. However, it must first be considered that our church is thought of more or less extensively in the newer and newest theological

614) [On the Unification of the American Lutheran Church 2, p. 38](#).
[English translation: [Conversion and Election, pg 53](#); text file [here](#)].

literature — and especially in the dogmatic literature. As we have seen, this is done in an accusatory and condemnatory manner, as if we were spreading dead orthodoxy with our adherence to the Scripture Principle, i.e. as if we were to be regarded as an evil in the Christian Church. In this respect alone, an oratio pro domo would be in order. Then, in this forced self-defense, we always keep in mind the purpose of self-exhortation. When we think of what God gave to our fathers and what, by God's grace, is still predominantly found among us, then we also address to ourselves, to the present and possibly still coming generation, the urgent admonition to hold fast to the way of the first church, the Reformation and the fathers of our synod. Finally, we do not lose sight of the interest of the universal Church of the present. Modern theologians rightly demand of dogmatics that it not isolate itself, but place itself in the midst of the actual situation of the Church of the present. If we now examine the situation of the Church and its theology in the present, we cannot escape the perception that it is a situation of great embarrassment. It is true that the flight of theology from the Holy Scriptures and its entry into the "storm-free castle" of pious human self-consciousness is said to be a necessary advance in theological method. But besides this, there is a noticeable uneasiness about the result of this theological move, namely about the apparent chaos in the doctrines. This chaos is actually seen as an ideal state only by the extreme left, which with Lessing does not want any "certainty of truth" at all. For this reason, voices have already been raised in the modern-theological camp as to whether a return to the abandoned castle of the divine authority of Scripture should not be considered. These voices have not yet made any perceptible impression on the majority of the ichtheologians. In great self-deception, the fear is repeatedly expressed that with a return to the Scripture Principle "dead orthodoxy" will make its entrance into the Christian Church. Therefore, Walther's detailed description of the state of affairs in our American Lutheran Church, which has remained in the old castle, has triumphed in it and from it, should also find attention outside our ecclesiastical community and suggest the thought

that what has proven itself in the American Lutheran Church should also prove to be the right church-building means in other countries. *Experto crede Ruperto*, Luther used to say when praising the power of the Word of God. If, for example, in Germany, the theological teachers and pastors, instead of accusing Luther and the dogmatists, were to return by God's grace to their theological method (*sola Scriptura* and *sola gratia*, resp. *satisfactio vicaria*), then, in accordance with the divine promise, a true Lutheran ecclesiastical system would again arise in Germany, and doctrinal confusion would be replaced by agreement in doctrine; for: Ἐάν υμεῖς μείνητε ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῷ ἐμῷ, ... γνώσεσθε τὴν ἀλήθειαν. [Ed.- John 8:31-32 — "if ye continue in My Word, then... ye shall know the truth"] [Ed.- NOTE!! – green shaded areas pp 197-202 missing in English edition.] At present, indeed, the separation of church and state has been officially pronounced in Germany. This has brought to the fore the question of how the Church of Germany should reorganize itself to secure its life under the changed circumstances. The episcopal constitution was thought of and in part already introduced. There is nothing to be said against the episcopal constitution in itself; but without a return to the word of the apostles and prophets as God's infallible word, the foundation on which the Christian church is built is missing, and even the "bishops" are only a piece of decoration which covers the sad state of affairs in the church. At present the complaint is going through Lutheran countries and Lutheran parts of the country that not only the great Roman sect, but also the various Reformed sects are particularly zealous in propaganda. Without a return to Scripture, the Church of Germany is not only powerless against the propaganda of Rome, but is also no match for the propaganda of such Reformed sects, which, in addition to errors, still accept Scripture as the Word of God and also still teach the *satisfactio vicaria*. By relinquishment of the Scriptures as the Word of God and by the associated relinquishment of the *satisfactio Christi vicaria*, the modern theologians of Germany have handed over the weapons of the Christian Church to the enemies and are *eo ipso* just as powerless against Rome and the sects as political Germany is a plaything of the arbitrariness of its enemies after the weapons have been handed over. The theology of Germany must return to the theology which it rejects of the "strictly confessional American Lutheran Church" as a theology of reprimatination. By the way, we should remember in this context that this

Theology comes from Germany, namely from Germany's best time in the last century. After the freedom fights against the French world domination, a significant religious revival went through Germany. It emanated primarily from lay circles, but also extended to a part of the student youth. At the University of Leipzig, the majority of the Fathers of the Missouri Synod belonged to the cluster of faithful students thus described: "They gathered on certain days of each week for common prayer, common reading of the Holy Scriptures, for the purpose of edification and mutual exchange about the one thing that is needful."⁶¹⁵ [Franz Delitzsch](#) († 1890) [[ADB article](#)] also belonged to this student circle. [A. Köhler](#) says in the [Herzog Realenzyklopädie](#) that Delitzsch, after his conversion from rationalism to Christianity, pursued the study of theology together "with his like-minded friends, most of whom later became the founders of the strictly confessional trend in the Lutheran Church of North America."⁶¹⁶ In this circle, as is further reported,⁶¹⁷ there was initially no address to the doctrinal difference between the various churches. But with the growth in knowledge, after some time, the question arose: of what faith are you? Are you Lutheran or Reformed or United? The result of this was a sifting, but most of them soon recognized that it was none other than the Lutheran faith, which the Holy Spirit had sealed in the diligent and salvation-seeking scriptural scholars as the true one, standing alone in adversity and temptation, even before they knew which church faith it was. Now Delitzsch, what he had recognized as Christian truth after his transition "from the school of Spinoza and Fichte into the school of Christ"⁶¹⁸, later forgot again for the most part. The later Delitzsch is an example of the inevitable degeneration of theology when it departs from its sole source and norm and, under the dazzling appearance of "science," becomes guilty of unscientific μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος ["[change to different genus](#)"]. However, the later Delitzsch, too, has not forgotten the period of his life which he spent together with the founders of "the strictly confessional trend in the Lutheran church of

615) Hochstetter, [Geschichte der Missourisynode](#), p. 65.

616) [RE](#).³ IV. 566. [Ed. RE == *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, 1898 3rd edition, lines 13-15; full article by A. Köhler on Delitzsch, pgs [565](#) - [570](#) ([PDF](#))]

617) Hochstetter, op. cit. [p. 66](#).

618) This is how Delitzsch himself describes his conversion to Christianity in the [preface](#) to his writing "[Vom Hause Gottes oder Kirche](#)," [Dresden 1849](#).

North America", declared to be the happiest time of his life. This is also reported by A. Köhler, op. cit.: "The last three years of his academic studies, 1832-34, Delitzsch himself calls the happiest of his life: 'they were the time of my first love, the springtime of my spiritual life.'" Also, it should be noted that Delitzsch continued to bear witness to Lutheran truth for quite some time after his academic studies ended. His biographer in the Realenzyklopädie reports that Delitzsch, after receiving his doctorate in philosophy in Leipzig in 1836, led the "worship exercises" of the "quiet ones in the country" until 1842, and that "the religious trend of these circles was that of a healthy pietism walking faithfully in the paths of strict Lutheran confession." This also clearly emerges from a paper that Delitzsch published in 1839 on the occasion of the tercentenary of the Reformation in the city of Leipzig under the title "Lutheranism and Lying"⁶¹⁹⁾. What has always been interesting and instructive about this paper is that Delitzsch describes here in all the main points the position that a truly Christian theology has to take in relation to modern theology. But this is the position which characterized our American Lutheran Church of "strictly confessional trend" from the very beginning and which is then also described against the accusation of "repristination" in a summarizing way by Walther in *Lehre und Wehre* 1875. Delitzsch's Festschrift has been classified as "more practical and edifying"; however, it can also be described at once as dogmatic and as dogmatically instructive. Moreover, it shows a factual agreement with the Fathers of the Missouri Synod on the main points, even though the latter generally treated the same matters in a calmer tone. But Delitzsch's writing is, after all, a festschrift. The author addresses the Lutheran congregations of Leipzig: "Evangelical-Lutheran congregations of my dear beloved father city, take also my festive greeting, connected with the most intimate intercession, to the forthcoming jubilee celebration of the Reformation introduced in our midst." In the preface Delitzsch says against the accusation that he is practicing repristination theology: "I confess, without being ashamed, that in matters of faith I am three hundred years behind, because

619) The overall title is: Luthertum und Lügentum. An Open Confession at the Reformation Anniversary of the City of Leipzig. By Franz Delitzsch. Grimma 1839.

I have realized, after a long insanity, that the truth is only one, and that it is eternal, unchangeable, and, because revealed by God, in need of no sifting or improvement.. Delitzsch wants to remind the Leipzig congregations of three main doctrines "which were brought to light again by the Reformation under God's assistance after long darkness had enveloped them: the doctrine of the standing of Holy Scriptures or the Word of God, the doctrine of justification, the doctrine of the means of grace." Of Holy Scriptures he says [pg 6-7], "It alone is the ground on which the Christian Church defies the gates of hell, the touchstone by which she distinguishes truth from falsehood, by which she judges, but by which she is also to be judged. To this word she must absolutely submit with reverence, with humility, with self-denial. She is set over this Word not as a judge, but as a steward, of whom God will require an account; she shall, where she does not wish to incur the curse of God, neither add to nor subtract from this Word; she shall, without all fear of man and complaisance to man, confess her faith in this Word and renounce all unrighteousness or heretical doctrine according to the express command of God." By disregarding the Holy Scriptures, Rome fell [pg 8]. "The fathers of our Lutheran Church, however, did not fight antichristianity with antichristianity; they did not, for instance, attach to or even superimpose upon Holy Scriptures another source of knowledge, such as tradition. They did not substitute the natural light of human reason, nor the supernatural light of immediate enlightenment, for the long-established darkness, but the light of Holy Scriptures, without which human reason, whether philosophizing or raving, remains forever blind and unenlightened. Admittedly, you [neologists] divide between the letter and the spirit. [You flatter yourselves that Luther is your patron. But Luther never understands by the Word of God anything different from the letter of the Holy Scriptures, never the inspiration of an inner light, the vagaries of blind reason, or the mirages of perverse feeling, but always the written Word according to its simple understanding of the Word, according to its clear sense, to the exclusion of all human mediation, falsification, and spiritualization-the Holy Scriptures, through which alone, but through whichever God the Holy Spirit works, let them be to the hearer or reader a savor of life unto life, or a savor of death unto death." On the position towards the symbolic

books, Delitzsch expresses himself thus [pg 18-19]: "The symbolic books, it is said now, were good for that time, now they are ripe to be abrogated, so that the teachers, who are sworn on them, are no longer exposed to the suspicion of perjury. For the doctrines of the neologists are in direct contradiction with the symbolic books, if one does not want to interpret them in the same spiritual way as one is used to do with the Bible. No one is a member of the Lutheran Church but he who acknowledges the Scriptural nature of this Confession and, where he has the teaching profession, teaches in accordance with the obligation to the same. This confession is based on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament books, and recognizes both the Old and New Testament books of the canon as inspired by the Holy Spirit, as equally venerable and unbreakable, as consistent and conclusive, as clear, perfect, and sufficient to distinguish from the unmixed truth revealed in them the falsehood which is contrary to them." Of the old Lutheran theologians Delitzsch [pg 24] says: "Those old Lutheran teachers were not merely learned but also sanctified theologians, instructed in the school of the Holy Spirit, filled with heavenly wisdom, sweet consolation, and living knowledge of God; God's Word was implanted in their hearts, it was mixed with their faith and transformed into sap and power with them. God's Word, not human wisdom, nor understood by human wisdom, but experienced by divine grace, was the heavenly fire on which they lit their torch. Look, my people, into the mirror of your ancestors, remember the past time until now and consider what God has done to the old fathers. Ask your father, and he will tell you; your elders, and they will tell you, Deut. 32:7. Thus says the Lord: 'Stand in the ways, and look, and inquire of the former ways, which is the good way; and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls,' Jer. 6:16. I preach to you retrogression, that is, to the Word of God from which you have fallen. Your enlightenment is to me a dark, starless, eerie night; you have confused the terms in your frenzy, otherwise you could not compare an Egyptian darkness, which is the judgment of God because you rejected the light of the Reformation, to a sunny day." After expounding the doctrines of justification and the means of grace brought back to light by the Reformation, Delitzsch concludes his Jubilee writing thus:

"I turn back to you, beloved companions of the same city and the same church, whom I met with kindness and festive greetings right at the threshold of my booklet. I have submitted myself to be your doctrine; for I know that you have teachers who are called to teach you and to shepherd you. But the Word of God also commands us, 'Let us exhort one another, and that much more, as much as ye see the day approaching.' Hebr. 10:25. I have tried to follow this divine call, for I am one of you, filled with heartfelt love for our beloved Leipzig, the city of philanthropy and gentleness, and for the dear Saxon land, the land of the spirit of the craftsman and of faithfulness. What I have expressed and tried to defend is nothing other than the faith of the old Lutheran Church, which our ancestors professed three hundred years ago on the holy feast of Pentecost with fervent prayers of thanksgiving. Search the Scriptures; you will learn and recognize that this faith is the Lutheran faith, that it is the Christian faith, founded on the immutable and imperishable Word of eternal truth. This faith has nothing to do with confused doubt, brooding gloom and sickly infirmity, as many think; oh no, it brings clear eyes, confident courage and strong vigor. The enlightened reason recognizes its irrefutable truth; the born-again heart finds in it heavenly comfort, blessed peace and rich refreshment. This faith overcomes the gates of hell and holds an eternal triumph through the gates of death. Shall we, my beloved, abandon such a proven and firm and joyful and victorious faith for a halved Christianity that limps on two sides and seeks to unite Christ and Belial, or even for a foolishly proud Enlightenment that rebukes the Word of God and idolizes reason, which is able to amuse us in life but not to comfort us in death? We would act foolishly in ourselves and irresponsibly in our descendants."

But even ten years later (1849), when he was professor of theology in Rostock, Delitzsch not only offered his greetings to his American friends of a "strictly confessional trend," but also renewed his commitment to the Lutheran Confessions and added the admonition to hold fast to this confession, because in it the "future" of the Lutheran church was decided. Delitzsch had in fact written his paper "Vom Hause Gottes oder der

Church" dedicated "to the Evangelical Lutheran pastors Brohm, Büniger, Bürger, Fürbringer, Geier, Gönner, Gruber, Keyl, Löber, Schieferdecker, Ferdinand Walther, Wege in Missouri, Illinois, Wisconsin and New York." We place a part of the dedicatory words here to illustrate somewhat further the church connection of Germany with the "strictly confessional trend" of the Missouri Synod. The words at the same time carry a strong dogmatic character and are therefore also in their place in a dogmatic. They read: "With the greeting of old, unfading love I greet you, who are of the house of the Lord, comrades of my first love for Christ, comrades of my first joy in the church of the true confession and the undiminished household of God, comrades of torturous struggles now passed by God's mercy. You, my Walther, initiated me into the deep seriousness of the divine order of grace. In my dealings with you and Bürger I first came to know and love the old ascetic writings of our church. In your congregation, dear Keyl, I held my first sermon; there I saw wonders of official pastoral care, there I spent paradisiacal days among your pastors. What deadly hatred of the world the simple sermon of the way of salvation excites, I saw in you, dear Bürger. By your word and example, you dear Wege and Brohm, Löber and Fürbringer, I became quite sure and glad of the Lutheran confession. And in a time of renewed wavering, I learned from you, dear Gruber, the right marks of the true church, by which I found it again, never to lose it again. ... Each of your names, dear brethren and friends, is a matter of my life story, strewn with indelible memories. We have lived through years of Pentecostal joy, bloody wrestling, oppressive excommunication, gracious deliverance, and looking back, our mouths must be full of laughter and our tongues full of praise. For the Lord has judged us with gentleness and reigns with much mercy. His sweet love is still in our hearts, the word of his truth in our mouths, and we have not gone astray from his holy church. Receive then this small offering as a sign of life of your friend's love for the Lord, his house and you, his household. ... What a glorious future awaits our Church, if she will supply the lamp of her good confession with the oil of the Spirit and go swiftly toward the coming Lord without stagnation! All you beloved brethren on the other side of the sea,

let us watch and pray that we do not lose the heritage of this future!" Under the printing of "unscientific science", as Walther used to express it, the later Delitzsch, as has already been noted, deviated from his own testimony of truth. But this does not take away the truth from his earlier testimony any more than Melancthon's later straying from the right path invalidates the truth he originally confessed. Gradually an estrangement occurred between our American Lutheran Church and the Church of Germany. We stuck to the Scriptures as the Word of God and as the only source and norm of theology and saw in Luther, the Reformer of the Church, the right model of how to teach in the Christian Church. The longer, the more German theology abandoned the Scriptures as the Word of God and walked in the paths of Schleiermacher, the "reformer of the nineteenth century," who did not lead the church and its theology back to the rock of the Word of God, as the reformer of the sixteenth century did, but dragged the church and theology into the swamp of subjectivism by issuing the slogan of drawing Christian doctrine from the allegedly pious ego of the theologizing subject, the "experience," etc., instead of from the Scriptures. In this swamp of subjectivism moves at present almost the whole theology of Germany, as far as the public doctrines come into consideration.

A layman (a lawyer) points out in the N. Kirchl. Zeitschr. (1923, p. 116) to the unfortunate political situation in which Germany presently finds itself and which is probably most deeply felt by American Lutherans of a "strictly confessional trend". May by God's grace, as in other countries, so also in Germany, theology be led out of the swamp of Ego theology! The layman writes, among other things: "The German people have sunk as low as in the time after the Thirty Years' War. But let us remember that in that time the life of faith developed most richly in the Evangelical Church. It was then that the most beautiful of our hymns came into being, which have been an inalienable treasure of our minds since childhood. Let us hope that precisely in the storms and temptations of the new age our church will prove to be a great force of life." This would happen, and the church would also now believe and pray away political distress as it did after the Thirty Years' War, if the church relationships were as they were then. At that time the teachers

of the people almost unanimously held to the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God and to the Christian doctrines drawn from the Scriptures. Out of this faith, the godly singers of the Lutheran Church sang the beautiful church songs that still refresh our hearts. Now, unfortunately, it stands differently, namely, that the public teachers of the church almost unanimously deny the infallible divine authority of Scripture and reject the Christian doctrines sung about in those glorious hymns as reprobation theology. This also happens in the same number of the "Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift" on the part of a theologian who, with significant factual ignorance, addresses an "irretrievable case of the old dogmatic doctrine of inspiration" and, with a corresponding lack of sense of truth, accusingly points to a "Lutheran Judaism" "where one believes to have already fulfilled one's task in mechanical, outwardly accomplished appropriation of the authority of Scripture as well as of the confessional writings". We theologians are very difficult to convert by experience, if we have once thoroughly gone astray, e.g. no longer know whether we should teach from the Holy Scriptures or from our own inner being. Therefore, in Germany, also this time, as in the previous century, salvation will have to come primarily from the "lay circles," perhaps under the leadership of pastors who have hitherto received little attention. Just as here in America at the present time the laymen among the Baptists are seeking to bring about an association extending throughout the country, the purpose of which is to protect the church and the world from a generation of unbelieving pastors who are the product of the universities and seminaries where "for the divine creation evolution is used, for the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures the faith consciousness of the individual, for Christ, the Son of God, the ideal man Jesus, for faith in the vicarious satisfaction of Christ moral aspirations after the model of the ideal man Jesus, for heaven and eternal salvation earthly bliss (social gospel)." ⁶²⁰⁾

What has been said at some length about the doctrinal position of the Missouri Synod is also true of the synods in church fellowship

 620) See p. 146 f. The communications from *The Fundamentalist*, Vol. II, No. 1.

with it.⁶²¹⁾ From the Wisconsin Synod we have a great dogmatic work by Dr. Adolf Höncke († 1908).⁶²²⁾ This dogmatic work is proof of the fact that a dogmatist can work independently and yet be in complete agreement with others in doctrine. Höncke also comes to the conclusion that the doctrine which the Lutheran Church confesses in its symbols is the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, and this doctrine is both presented by him from the Scriptures and victoriously asserted in astute polemics against the old, the newer and the newest false teachers. Particularly detailed are the Prolegomena, in which the author also deals in detail with the modern experience theology. Höncke demonstrates that this experiential theology, which in principle seeks to draw and standardize Christian doctrine not from Scripture but from within the theologizing subject, is both contrary to Scripture and suffers from self-contradictions.⁶²³⁾ We highlight some main points from Höncke's dogmatics that characterize the author as a dogmatist. Höncke teaches: Scripture and the Word are to be identified absolutely. "We reject all views according to which not everything in the Bible is said to be God's Word, or, what the same thing says, according to which not everything in Scripture is from God

 621) These are in America the United Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan and others, the Slovak Synod of America and the Norwegian Synod, in Germany the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Saxony and others, in Australia the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Australia.

622) The full title is: *Ev.-Luth. Dogmatik* by Dr. theol. Adolf Höncke, former director and professor at the seminary of the General Lutheran Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan and others at Wauwatosa, Wis. Edited for printing by his sons Walther and Otto Höncke. 1909 et seq. Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, Wis. Four volumes of about 460 pages each, large octavo.

623) Frank's "System of Christian Certainty" is also discussed in detail by Höncke with the reason: "This closer examination has its reason not in the importance of this system; for in fact it brings nothing new, neither according to principle (operating from consciousness is, as we have seen so far, something that was there long before) nor according to method and tendency (certainty, apart from Scripture, is also something old). The work alone caused a sensation and found prestige, which latter is the questionable thing. In addition, Frank is often considered a positive theologian from a genuine Lutheran point of view. One encounters in German theological writings much the expression of confidence in him as a Lutheran theologian. Thus, the interest of the Lutheran Church demands that we go into more detail about this work." (1, 120-150.)

and written by divine inspiration." Because Scripture and the Word of God are reciprocal terms, Scripture is also the only source and norm of theology.⁶²⁴⁾ What belongs in dogmatics is decided by Scripture and not by a systematic structure. Systematics lead astray. Just think of the doctrine of election by grace of Calvinism or the doctrine of election and calling doctrines of the synergistic Lutherans here and there.⁶²⁵⁾ If one understands by dogmatic method the external grouping of doctrines, the method may be a different one. *Methodus est arbitraria*. But no method may be applied in such a way that anything given in Scripture is thereby methodized out.⁶²⁶⁾ Hönecke, describing the synthetic and analytical method, also mentions Coccejus' federal method and the biblical-historical method, which takes the biblical history as a basis and follows it up with the dogmatic. None is to be rejected absolutely. "What is to be rejected, however, is the method of development from Christian consciousness, etc., employed by the moderns (Frank, etc.)." With this method the newer ones "want to get around the Scriptures. It opens the door to subjectivism." "Dogmatics is merely systematic, that is, well-ordered presentation of theological knowledge drawn from God's Word in faith. It is thus constantly engaged in substantiating and proving itself from God's Word. The Word of God, like its source (*principium cognoscendi, norma causativa*), is also its guide by which it is constantly measured." About the symbols Hönecke says: "Our [Lutheran] church has laid down its knowledge from God's Word in the symbols, and so a Lutheran dogmatics must also stand before the standard of the Symbols. But this does not set a second standard; for the Symbols themselves have their standard in Scripture, they are themselves a standardized norm (*norma normata*)." Hönecke also takes on the old Protestant dogmatists: "Through the whole of the newer Positive Dogmatics there passes a different trait than through the old orthodox dogmatics. The old dogmatics is theocentric, the newer positive anthropocentric."⁶²⁷⁾ Hönecke stands up for the much-maligned Calov with these words: "The most important theologian among those who apply the method of Calixt is indisputably Abraham Calov. Physically fit

624) I. 329 ff. 625) I. 259 f. 626) I. 325 ff. 627) I. 315.

even in old age and not paralyzed by the abundant domestic cross, he remained one of the most faithful, zealous and vigorous advocates of strict Lutheranism until the end of his life. His honest polemical zeal is often reproached to him. According to the judgment of the newer ones, he is a man who constantly stands like a watchdog in front of his Lord's house and barks, biting at all who even want to break off something at the fence. Such a man, of course, does not please such theologians who are willing to give away almost everything, even the core doctrines. In Calov's time, just as today, people began to break off so quietly and silently at the fence of the pure doctrine under correct sounding phrase; there he could not keep silent as a faithful guardian and therefore has to put up with the fact that today he is much reviled. He is often reproached for his sixth marriage at an advanced age, even with honorable words (RE. 1 II, 607), while, on the other hand, Schleiermacher's truly immoral relationship over many years, to which the moderns all pay homage, is not touched upon at all, or at least extremely gently (RE.¹ XIII, 743). *Sine ira et studio*, this is certainly not done."

As for Hönecke's influence on the Wisconsin Synod, he is described by Prof. J. Schaller († 1920) as the man through whom the Wisconsin Synod arrived at a clear doctrinal position. Schaller says: "It was a question at that time (when the Wisconsin Synod still belonged to the *General Council*) of giving the Wisconsin Synod an unmistakable doctrinal position and clarifying its relationship to other American church bodies as well as to the German Church. It belonged at that time to the General Council, which, although it stood much more firmly in its commitment to Lutheran doctrine than the General Synod, nevertheless displeased the decided Lutherans who belonged to the Wisconsin Synod because of unionist practice. On the other hand, the Missouri Synod stood with its unequivocal commitment to the symbolic books of the Lutheran Church and its firm testimony against those who were not serious about the Lutheran confession in practice. The young pastor Hönecke took an active and soon decisive part in the proceedings on the confession question. For he had thrown himself into the study of the old Lutheran dogmatists and quickly gained not only a thorough acquaintance with their doctrinal position, but also the heartfelt conviction that any unionist fraternization was not only denial of the Lutheran

Confessions, but of the gospel itself. His influence contributed in an outstanding way to the Wisconsin Synod severing its connection with the General Council, and also made itself felt powerfully when, in 1868, proceedings were held with the Missouri Synod, which concluded with the mutual recognition of the two bodies. Therefore he is also among those who deserve to be remembered as founders of the Synodical Conference which came into being in 1872." ⁶²⁸⁾ We find no doctrinal difference between Walther and Hönecke, in which we rightly see once again a testimony to the unifying power of the Word of God. Like the fathers of the Missouri Synod among themselves, Walther and Hönecke were strongly marked and different characters. They also came from different church relationships. Hönecke studied theology in Halle under Hupfeldt, Julius Müller, and Tholuck, that is, at a time when the reign of rationalism had already been broken in Halle. In his *Dogmatik*⁶²⁹⁾ Hönecke says of Tholuck: "Tholuck pointed many of his students on the path of life, but became grudging with them when they took more strictly confessional paths like the author of this *Dogmatik*, who nevertheless revered him at all times as a man to whom he had much to thank." Hönecke came to the United States in 1863, twenty-four years after the immigration of the Saxons, as an emissary of the Berlin Missionary Society, to be active in the church care of the immigrant Germans here. He became a member of the Wisconsin Synod and soon its theological leader, as already reported in Prof. Schaller's words above. It is probably appropriate to point out here that Hönecke in his *Dogmatik* ⁶³⁰⁾ also describes Walther as a theologian. In this description of Walther, Hönecke at the same time describes himself as a theologian, as can be seen from the attached judgments. He says about Walther: "Karl F. W. Walther was a theologian of Scripture. What the Ritschlian Kattenbusch (*Von Schleiermacher zu Ritschl*, p. 3) puts down as Walther's weakness, that he again issued the slogan: Only *loci*!, since it is the signature of the revelation that we learn only incoherent matters from God's mysteries, that must be credited to Walther as praise.

 628) In the preface to Hönecke's *Dogmatik IX* f.

629) I, 306. 630) I, 320 ff. [pp 320-323; English ed. pp. 347-349]

He thus places himself in the ranks of the genuine Lutheran theologians, while the so-called confessional theologians over there, since they strive for real systems, stand under the influence of Schleiermacher, as Kattenbusch also declares of them. To make systems, to rhyme apparently contradictory doctrines, is not the task of the theologian, according to Walther. On the contrary, he considers all system-making to be harmful and not beneficial in theology; it does not deepen the doctrines, but only dissolves them. He agrees with the words of Luther: "If rhyming is to apply, we will not keep any article in the faith. Just as little as systematizing and rhyming doctrines, he considers it the task of the theologian, which the moderns also want so much, to reconcile Scripture and science, faith and knowledge. In doing so, according to him, Scripture and faith must suffer. — With all respect for real science ([L. u. W. 21, Foreword](#)), scientific theology in the sense of the moderns is something foreign to him. Science should only serve as a handmaiden in theology; if it wants to be more, it must leave. The theology of Scripture is already corrupted when one thinks that one wants to help the Word of Scripture with scientific proofs. — The only principle of knowledge in theology is Scripture. What is not from Scripture does not belong in theology. 'No less do we agree,' he writes, 'therefore also with Johann Gerhard: The only principle of theology is the Word of God; therefore what is not revealed in the Word of God is not theological.' He therefore absolutely rejected all theologizing on the basis of enlightened reason ([L. u. W. 21, 225 ff.](#)). 'All such apologetics,' he says ([L. u. W. 34, 326](#)) [Ed.- ref. [L. u. W. 21, pg 41](#); [Editorials from Lehre und Wehre](#), p. 135], 'we hate with all our heart, for it presupposes that there is something more certain than God's Word, from which more certain the mysterious content of revelation can be derived.' — While the newer confessional theologians over there define theology as the 'ecclesiastical science of Christianity' (so [Luthardt, comp., p. 2](#)) and speak of its 'relationship to philosophy' (Öttingen, Dogm. I, 411), Walther calls it, what is considered by Öttingen as a primitive point of view (loc. cit., p. 397), with Chemnitz and the other ancients as *habitus practicus*. He says: 'What is the purpose of the ministry is also the purpose of theology. But this is true faith, the knowledge of truth for godliness, and finally eternal life' ([L. u. W. 14, 73](#)). — According to Walther, one becomes a theologian only through the Holy Spirit from the Word of God. A true

theologian is only one who is born again through the spirit by means of the word. In his edition of Baier, he cites Luther's words ([p. 69](#)): 'No one will make you a doctor of the Holy Scriptures, but the Holy Spirit from heaven alone, as Christ says John 6:45'. From the word the theologian, and what he drives, is again the word. — The Scriptures were Walther's Word of God and nothing else. He did not shake the old church doctrine of inspiration. Rohnert praises him for the fact that in the last decades he probably stood up most decisively for the old dogmatic verbal inspiration ([Dogmatik, p. 105](#)). Walther held fast to the inspiration of Scripture, because he saw that if one yielded even in the least here, one would give up that Scripture alone was the source and norm of theology. — Walther does not recognize 'open questions', like the Iowa Synod. The church does not require symbolic processing to make a doctrine a church doctrine. The Confessions do not make new church doctrines, but only present them. Scripture is the decisive thing. Therefore, the Bible doctrine is also church doctrine, even if it is not yet treated in the symbols ([L. u. W. 14, 133](#) ff.). However, Walther held the Confessions in high esteem. Everywhere he refers to them in his writings and to the statements of the faithful Lutheran doctrines. But his theology is not a repristination theology in the bad sense, as the newer theologians over there cry out; for with him it is not the old dogmatists or the symbols that are decisive, but the Scriptures. — As a theologian of Scripture he has no special doctrines which he has preferred to drive, but the course of time brought it about that he had to drive some doctrines especially and worked them through vigorously: the doctrine of church and ministry as against the Buffalo Synod, the doctrine of election and calling as against the Ohio and Iowa Synods, the doctrine of justification and reconciliation as against Erlangen theology and the sectarianism of the country."

Thus Hönecke about Walther. The actual struggle over the doctrines of church and ministry, which was being waged almost simultaneously in Germany as well, had already ended when Hönecke came to the United States. But even in these doctrines he bears witness to Christian truth in the face of the error that has risen up on the left and on the right, as is evident from his Dogmatics. He teaches: The⁶³¹⁾

631) [IV, 146](#) ff.

Church in the true sense of the word is only the faithful Christians, and only they are the original owners of all spiritual goods and rights. Therefore, it is they who "hand over" the Ministry to the persons capable of it by calling. With regard to the question whether the public ministry is of divine or human order, he decisively teaches the divine order.⁶³²⁾ On the one hand, he opposes Grabau, Loehe, Kliefoth, Münchmeyer, and others who, romanticizing, make of the public ministry a means of grace apart from Word and Sacrament; on the other hand, he opposes Hase, Köstlin, Höfling, Luthardt, and others who deny the divine order of the public ministry in the sense that it has a divine command, and maintain that the ministry in *concreto* emerges from the Christian congregation with inner necessity without an explicit divine command.

As far as the doctrines of Conversion and Election of Grace are concerned, the charge has been leveled against Hönecke, respectively against the Wisconsin Synod and other synods within the Synodical Conference, not only in American but also in European publications and writings, that they "willingly swallowed the bitter Missouriian Calvinist pill at the time."⁶³³⁾ Expressed without illustration, the charge is that Hönecke and the synods of which he was the most influential theologian, without their own conviction, indeed against their own conviction, sided with the Missouri Synod in the controversy over the Lutheran doctrine of conversion and Election of Grace. The allegedly swallowed "bitter Missouriian-Calvinist pill" has this meaning: At the beginning of the seventies of the last century, from the Iowa Synod and about eight years later also from the Ohio Synod, the charge was brought against the Missouri Synod that it had fallen into a "fundamental error", namely into "Calvinism". What had been going on? Within the Missouri Synod had happened what has happened at all times when Christian doctrine has been seriously acted upon and considered in the Christian Church. In the doctrinal proceedings at synods and conferences, the so-called *crux theologorum* had occasionally come up, namely, the fact that the Formula of Concord so

632) IV, 175 ff.


633) Thus the Leipziger *Allgemeine Ev.-Luth. Kirchenzeitung* 1893, No.

formulated: "One is made obdurate, perverse, given to a perverse mind; another, as well in the same guilt, is again converted." This question was dealt with in the apostolic church,⁶³⁴⁾ then towards Pelagianism and Semipelagianism in the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries,⁶³⁵⁾ especially also at the time of the Reformation, e.g. in the sharply pointed question why Saul is rejected, David accepted, Peter converted, Judas lost.⁶³⁶⁾ What was (and still is) taught within the Missouri Synod can be summarized in three sentences: 1. We know from Scripture exactly the reason for conversion: it is God's work of grace alone. (2) We also know from Scripture exactly the reason for non-conversion: it is man's reluctance to accept the working of the Holy Spirit (*sola hominis culpa*). (3) Since the grace of God is both universal and sincere, and all men are in the same total ruin, it remains a mystery to our human understanding in this life why some are converted, and others are not. We expect the solution of this mystery in eternal life. Any attempt to solve it in this life brings us into contradiction with Scripture. The mystery would be easily solved if we were allowed, with Erasmus and the later Melanchthon, to assume something in man (*aliquid in homine*) as the reason or explanatory ground for a man's conversion (*facultas se applicandi ad gratiam*, different behavior, refrain from willful resistance, etc.), or if it were permitted to be taught in the Christian Church that conversion depends not only on God's grace but also on the behavior of man. But this solution enters into contradiction with all the statements of Scripture, which so clearly ascribe the origin of faith to the work of God's grace and omnipotence, and not only deny to man any inclination to the Gospel, but also ascribe to himself enmity against it. The

634) Rom. 11:33-36. In general, the whole section ch. 9-11 belongs here.

635) Scriptural position on the *crux theologorum* in the Canons of Arausio (Orange) 529. In Mansi VIII, 712 ff. I have had the 25 sentences reprinted in "[The Basic Difference in the Doctrine of Conversion and Election of Grace,](#)" 1903, pp. 34 ff. Cf. also [Zur Einigung 2](#), 1913, p. 3 f. [English: [Conversion and Election](#), p. 5, text [here.](#)]

636) The contrast between Luther and the later Melanchthon [II, 583](#).

mystery would also be completely solved if, with Calvin, we were allowed to substitute *gratia particularis* for *gratia univrsalis* as the reason for non-conversion. But this solution is also forbidden, because it brings us into contradiction with all the statements of Scripture which so clearly and powerfully teach the *gratia universalis, seria et efficax* and expressly extend the effect of the Holy Spirit aimed at conversion also to those men who are not converted and saved. Therefore, in view of the same grace of God and in view of the same total ruin of men, a rational ("cognitive") answer to the question: *Cur alii, alii non?* is to be dispensed with in this life. In other words: It is the only right God-willed theology to acknowledge at this point a mystery that cannot be solved in this life. So Luther and Chemnitz. So also very pronounced the Formula of Concord, which after stating the fact: "One is hardened, blinded, given into a perverse mind, another, so well in the same guilt, is again converted" [*Trigl.* 1081, 57 ,] expressly adds that here is a "question" whose answer is impossible in this life, because the scriptural revelation does not go beyond Hos. 13:9 ("O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help."), and states very definitely that, according to Scripture, when we compare the saved with the lost, we would have to teach the same guilt and the same evil conduct in the former as in the latter. On the other hand, it has been strangely asserted from the Lutheran synods mentioned above: "It is not true that the Lutheran Church leaves unanswered the question why death and reluctance are taken away from one man and not from another. It is not true that the Lutherans beat this question down." "That of two men who hear the gospel, in one reluctance and death are taken away, and in the other not — this has its reason in the will of man, it has its reason in the fact that one persistently, obstinately and willfully resists the grace of God, while the other lets his natural reluctance be overcome by the Holy Spirit. It has its reason in the free self-decision of man." God "makes it depend on man's decision whom he will have mercy on and whom he will harden." "We shall know the reason of it, that in one man reluctance and death are taken away,

... in the different behavior of men toward the offered grace."⁶³⁷⁾ "So the different operation of converting and saving grace is probably explained by the different conduct of men toward it." ⁶³⁸⁾ This doctrine, according to which the "different conduct" of men is used as a ground of explanation for the fact why, of two men hearing the Gospel, one believes, while the other does not, and according to which conversion and salvation stand in man's own hands, is the doctrine of the later Melancthon, so emphatically rejected in the Formula of Concord. It is also the doctrine of modern Lutherans like Dieckhoff and Luthardt, who think they must delete *sola gratia* in order to prove the church against Calvinism.⁶³⁹⁾ And because the Missouri Synod held fast to *sola gratia* as well as to general grace, the legend of the Missouri "Calvinism" has been spread throughout the world, and that is why the "Allgemeine Ev.-Luth. Kirchenzeitung" also spoke of the "bitter Missouri Calvinist pill" which supposedly the synods of Wisconsin, Minnesota, etc. had swallowed. With what clear knowledge of the doctrines of Holy Scriptures, of Luther, and of the Lutheran Confessions these Synods, we must say, so carelessly accused, treated all pertinent points of doctrine, is evident from their report on the Synod convention in 1882.⁶⁴⁰⁾ In order to prevent anyone from saying yes to the result of the proceedings against his conviction, it was decided after the detailed proceedings "to meet again in the afternoon in fellowship and to induce each member of the two synods to declare his agreement with the doctrine presented or, if he could not profess the same, to make this known as well."⁶⁴¹⁾ The position of the two synods on the doctrine of Scripture and the Lutheran Confession is evident from the following decisive sentences:⁶⁴²⁾ "Man cannot contribute in the least to his conversion either by his actions or by his conduct, and that some are converted while

637) *Monatshefte* 1872, pp. 80, 87, 103.

638) *Zeitblätter* 1911, p. 526. 639) II, note 1296; II, note 1317.

640) Proceedings of the 32nd Assembly of the Wisconsin Synod in fellowship with the Minnesota Synod at La Crosse, Wis. from June 8 to 14, 1882.

641) Report, p. 34 f. 642) op. cit. p. 23. 39. 56. 41.

others remain in their ruin can no more be declared by setting up a difference among men than by denying the general will of God for grace." "It remains a mystery why some are converted while others remain unconverted. Only this must be firmly stated, that just as the remaining of some in an unconverted state is founded in God's purpose, so also the conversion of others is not founded in a difference of reluctance." "When the twofold question is asked: Whence comes it that some are converted and others not? one cannot answer: 'It comes from God' or: 'It comes from men,' but that a man is converted comes from the mighty effect of God's grace in the gospel, which has been wrought on him. But that the other is not converted, that comes from the mighty power and effect of his evil heart, which has resisted God's grace." "The Formula of Concord knows nothing of a solution of the mystery here involved by a distinction between natural and willful reluctance, but says, where it addresses the mysteries about which we are not to brood: 'One is blinded, given to a perverse mind, another, as well in like guilt, is again converted.'" In his dogmatics⁶⁴³⁾ Hönecke counts the insertion of "different human behavior" into the *ordo salutis* among human "system-building" that seeks to be clever beyond Scripture in the interest of a system of reason. In fact, the "different behavior" has been put on the theological market in order to declare rationally the fact: "One is hardened, blinded, given to a perverse sense, another, so well in the same guilt, is again converted". Above this, the scriptural statements, which are to the same utter ruin of all men, are then deleted. "Where one wanted to proceed strictly systematically [in the sense of "system-building"], the result has been the most serious aberration from Scripture. Always such a system, of whatever kind it may be, requires an answer to the question why, out of the many called, few are saved. This is where the system leads astray. Just think of the doctrine of election by grace of Calvinism [denial of *universalis gratia*] or of the doctrine of election and vocation of the synergistic Lutherans over here and over there" (denial of *sola gratia*).

643) I, 260.

In the foregoing, two theological representatives of the "strictly confessional trend" of the American Lutheran Church have been described. That Walther's sphere of influence was the larger is due to several reasons, but does not change the fact that both men, in spite of differences of character and conduct of life, were bound by the bond of complete unity in Christian doctrine and remained bound until their deaths. Both were "Repristination Theologians" in the right, godly sense of the word, and a concrete illustration of such words of Luther as this: "The word and the doctrine shall make Christian unity or fellowship; where the one is equal and united, the other will well follow"; further: "Let one church voluntarily follow the other in outward things, or let each one keep its customs; if only the unity of the Spirit in faith and in word is preserved, then the diversity and variety in earthly and visible things does no harm"; finally: "I do not want peace and unity if one loses the Word of God, for eternal life and everything would already be lost. It is not a matter of giving way or conceding something for the sake of you or some man, but all things must give way to the word, whether it be enemy or friend. For it is not given for the sake of outward or worldly unity and peace, but for the sake of eternal life." ⁶⁴⁴⁾ It is a pity that the American Lutheran Church of "strict confessional trend" and the Church in Germany have come apart! To recall the original unity of spirit between Walther and Franz Delitzsch: through Walther the Christian and theological way has come to full development, which once bound the friends of youth in Leipzig and which Delitzsch — we cannot help the impression — mourned in a certain sense until the end of his life. ⁶⁴⁵⁾

644) [St. L. IX, 831](#); [XVIII, 1985](#); [IX, 831](#).

645) This also appears to us from the letter of condolence that Delitzsch addressed to Walther's family on the occasion of his death. It is dated "Leipzig, Pfingstmontag 1887" [Ed. -note from English edition - reprinted in [Lehre und Wehre, 1887, 289 f.](#)] and contains, among other things. The following words about Walther: "There is hardly a living person who, like me, lived through the years of first love for the Savior he had found and then also through the travails under which the emigration was accomplished — God steeled him in this fire of challenge, so that he became an iron pillar and a wall of brass (Jer. 1:18) for our Lutheran church — a miracle in my eyes, in which my weak faith was often strengthened. In some things we, the two old friends, could not understand each other lately.

The question has been and is being asked about the influence that "the strictly confessional trend" of the American Lutheran Church has exerted externally, first on the older American Lutheran Church, which had almost only the name of Lutheranism left, then on Germany and other countries. This has also been bound up with the question of whether a "Repristination Theology" which holds to Scripture as God's infallible Word (verbal inspiration) and consequently also to the confession of the Lutheran Church in all matters, will be able to hold its own in this country and elsewhere. If we first look at the external influence, it is neither too low nor too high. Admittedly, a significant influence has been exerted on the older American Lutheran Church, although the fathers of the Missouri Synod were active almost exclusively through the medium of the German language. The most eminent theologian of the English Lutheran Church in America, Charles Porterfield Krauth († 1883), has repeatedly and in various turns expressed himself to the effect that the "Missourians" are to be regarded as benefactors of the American Lutheran Church. Krauth himself, under this influence, after prolonged inner struggles and after severe battles against his church environment, gained such a position on the Lutheran Church and its confession that he felt urged in his conscience to explicitly recant his earlier lax, unionist position. He wrote in 1865, among other things: ⁶⁴⁶⁾ "Our church can never have a true internal

but my love and veneration did not suffer any loss, and in the foundation we remained one, because in the bloody merit of Lord Jesus I also hide myself alive and dying. ... I hope to see my dear friend again, where there is no sea to separate us. ... The whole Lutheran Church has cause to mourn [on the occasion of Walther's death]." (This letter is printed in *extenso* in "[L. u. W.](#)" [1887, p. 289 f.](#)) In the same spirit Delitzsch also wrote to the author of this *Dogmatics* in 1887. The fact that the two old friends could not come to an understanding "in some things" lately was due to the fact that Delitzsch changed his former point of view under the printing of "science". As a "scientific theologian" he interposed "science" as the determining principle between himself and the Holy Scriptures. He gave away the inspiration of the Scriptures. That Delitzsch as a Christian held fast to the *satisfactio vicaria*, as we also hold to love, is a "happy inconsistency." That the denial of inspiration consequently also leads to the denial of *satisfactio vicaria*, Delitzsch already saw realized in his time (Hofmann, Frank) and is since then before our eyes as an almost general fact.

646) Quoted in [L. u. W. 11, 27 \[sic - pg 278\]](#) from the *Lutheran and Missionary*, July 13, 1865.

harmony except in the confession of these articles (the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession), and of all of them altogether, without reservation or ambiguity. This is our deep conviction, and we hereby solemnly retract before God and His Church, as we have already done earnestly and repeatedly in an indirect manner, all that we have written or said in conflict with this our present conviction. To do this we are not ashamed. We thank God who has guided us to see the truth." We have from Krauth a very significant and in some respects classic dogmatic work under the title *Conservative Reformation and Its Theology* (1871). Here again Krauth repeats in the preface ([p. XIII](#)), "The positions taken in this book are largely counter, in some respects, to the prevailing theology of *our time and our land*. No man can be more fixed in his prejudice against the views defended here than the author himself once was; no man can be more decided in his opinion that these views are false than the author is now decided in his faith that they are the truth. They have been formed in the face of all the influences of education and of bitter hatred or of contemptuous disregard on the part of nearly all who were most intimately associated with him in the period of struggle." In a masterly manner, Krauth also defended, for example, the Lutheran doctrines of Christ's person and of Holy Communion against Shedd's attacks and presented them as Scriptural.⁶⁴⁷⁾ But Krauth's theological position did not develop and prevail in the face of the tenacious opposition it found in his own circles. The most important English Lutheran dogmatist after Krauth is [Henry E. Jacobs](#). From him we possess *A Summary of Christian Faith* (1905). This dogmatic work is written in a very clever catechetical form. Also, in copious quotations from Luther, the Confessional Writings, and the Dogmatists, the effort to arrive at the scriptural Lutheran standpoint clearly appears. But by inserting the "different human behavior" into the order of salvation to answer the question: *Cur non omnes?* Jacobs turns decisively into the synergistic fairway. He writes:⁶⁴⁸⁾ "The differences in results in the call do not depend upon differences in God's will or upon the call

647) Cf. the quotations from Krauth, which we communicated in the doctrines of Christ's person and of the Lord's Supper, II, 306; III, 364. 376. 401 s.

648) *A Summary of Christian Faith*, p. 216 f.

having an irresistible efficacy attached to it in one case and having no efficacy attached to it in the other. The efficacy of the Word and call is constant; [so far correct, but now follows] the difference in results is determined by *a difference in man's attitude* toward the call." This adopts the doctrine of the later Melancthon, which, as we have seen, is so decidedly rejected by Luther, by Chemnitz, and by the Formula of Concord, because it denies the equal guilt and the equal evil conduct of those who are saved when compared with those who are lost, abrogates the *sola gratia*, and places the salvation of man instead of the *sola gratia* in man's hand, namely, in man's conduct or self-decision. Even when Dr. Schmauk, the president of the General Council, wanted to eliminate this synergism, e.g. by words like these: "Man's will is able to decide for salvation through new powers bestowed by God. This is the *subtle synergism* which has infected nearly the whole of Evangelical Protestantism, and which is or has been taught in institutions bearing the name of our Church."⁶⁴⁹⁾ he was rebuked and rebuked from within his own church fellowship.⁶⁵⁰⁾ But where the conversion and salvation of man is placed, instead of solely on God's grace, decisively on man's conduct, self-decision, self-settlement, etc., then the essence of the Christian religion, as distinguished from the religions invented by men, is in principle abandoned, and where this doctrine really asserts itself, then the struggle against Rome, against the works doctrine of the sects, also against the lodges, has lost its inner justification and power. Luther knew well what he was saying when he called out to Erasmus: *Iugulum meum petisti!* Jacobs has also given up the inspiration of the Scriptures (in the sense of the Scriptures). On the one hand he calls the Scriptures an "inerrant record" of divine revelation, but on the other hand he talks about "discrepancies" of the holy writers. He says, for example:⁶⁵¹⁾ "But there is a true sense in which we may say not only that 'the Bible is,' but 'that the Bible contains, the Word of God.' This occurs when each part, even the most insignificant and seemingly trifling, even the *discrepancies* between various human inspired writers, and all that pertains to *the limitations of their nature and environment and*

 649) *The Confessional Principle*, 1911, p. 752.

650) The quotations in F. Bente, *American Lutheranism*, II, 217 f.

651) *A Summary of the Christian Faith*, p. 284.

age and language, are regarded as bearing on the one great end and one great theme of revelation and its clear and inerrant record." Questions that have nothing to do with the inspiration of Scripture, such as the historical question of whether the Hebrew vowel points were originally written (Gerhard) or not written (Luther), are mixed into the doctrine of inspiration. ⁶⁵²⁾ [Jacobs writes](#): "But are not some of the most conservative defenders of traditional theories of inspiration also open to criticism? Yes, when they ignore or endeavor to conceal the human element in Scripture (see above, 8 a) or, what is the same, raise the human factor to an equality with the divine, as when it is claimed that the Hebrew vowel points are inspired." Jacobs brings out particularly sharply his rejection of the inspiration of Scripture in his introduction to [D. J. A. W. Haas' *Biblical Criticism* \(1903\)](#). Whereas Christ says of all Scripture and of every word of Scripture, "Scripture cannot be broken," and the apostle Paul says indiscriminately of all Scripture, "All Scripture inspired of God," even Peter assures us that the words of the Old Testament prophets and of the New Testament apostles are equally the words of the Holy Spirit, Jacobs distinguishes degrees of inspiration between the separate parts of the Old Testament, between the Old and New Testaments, and between the separate parts of the New Testament. "A text from Genesis and one from John, one from the Psalms and one from Romans, cannot stand upon the same footing." [see original [here](#)] "There are few theorists [!] who would assign the same degree of inspiration to the statistics and rolls in Ezra or Chronicles as to those parts of the New Testament for whose reading the dying ask when all other earthly words have lost their interest. Even the distinction between the Petrine and the Pauline theology, which the Tuebingen school so greatly exaggerated, contains within it an element of truth, when the difference is found to be one of degree, but not one of kind." ⁶⁵³⁾ Jacobs has appropriated pretty much all the ways in which modern theology combats the inspiration of Scripture. He appeals, for example, to the fact that the Augsburg Confession contains no exposition of the doctrine of inspiration. The Formula of Concord also does not formulate

652) [op. cit., p. 281](#)

653) Quotation from F. Bente, [American Lutheranism, II, 220](#) f. [see original [here](#)]

a definition, neither of revelation nor of inspiration. In order to discredit verbal inspiration, a mechanical conception of inspiration is ascribed to its proponents, contrary to historical truth: "If the verbal theory of inspiration mean that every word and letter are inspired, so that the writer was purely passive and performed a merely mechanical office, as 'the pen of the Holy Ghost,' this, we hold, is an assumption for which we have no warrant." [see original quote [here](#)]

Also, a great difference appears when we compare Dr. Krauth's attitude and position toward the "strictly confessional direction" of the American Lutheran Church with the attitude and position which the leaders now living manifest against this "direction." Krauth said, among other things: "I have been saddened beyond expression by the bitterness displayed toward the Missourians. So far as they have helped us to see the great principles involved in this disputation [on the four points: Altar and pulpit fellowship with non-Lutherans, chiliasm and lodges], they have been our benefactors, and although I know they have misunderstood some of us, that was perhaps inevitable. They are men of God, and their work has been of inestimable value." ⁶⁵⁴⁾ Further, in his address to the Pittsburgh Synod in 1866, Krauth declared that any external church union without unity in doctrine was displeasing to God and harmful to the church. "There can be, there is, no true unity but in the faith. ... The one *token of* this unity, that by which this internal thing is made visible, is the one expression of faith, one 'form of sound words.' used in simple earnestness, and meaning the same to all who employ it. ... You may agree to differ; but when men become earnest, difference in faith will lead first to fervent pleadings for the truth, and, if these be hopelessly unheeded, will lead to separation. All kinds of beliefs and unbeliefs may exist under the plea of toleration." ^{655a)} Contradicting this warning of its former president, the General Council has bound itself with the General Synod and the United Synod of the South to form the "United Lutheran Church of America," or "merger synods," without even attempting to resolve the doctrinal differences that exist. The General Council

654) Quoted in [F. Bente, op. cit., II, 185](#), from Späth's biography of Krauth II, 236.

655 a) [F. Bente, op. cit. II, 184](#).

has thus returned to the unionist position of the General Synod, for the sake of which it once separated from the General Synod. It has also been declared from within the Ohio Synod that with the formation of the United Lutheran Church of America Dr. Krauth's position, so earnestly striving for a Lutheran Church some in doctrine within the older Lutheran Church of America, is abandoned. We cannot escape the perception that in a large part of the American Lutheran Church neither Walther's nor Krauth's influence has been able to prevail.^{655b)}

655 b) [249] We have, besides Jacobs' *A Summary of the Christian Faith*, several major and minor dogmatic works in English. We mention: Milton Valentine, *Christian Theology*, 1905-1907, 2 vols; Revere F. Weidner, *Introduction to Dogmatic Theology* 2, 1895; Andrew Voigt, 1916. All are more or less influenced by modern "scientific" theology, but in such a way that Weidner and Voigt object to the grossest excesses. False witness spoken against the old dogmatists is well taken by modern theologians who have a name, *bona fide*. Voigt, for example, says in the Introduction, XVIII: "Confessionalism does not mean that it is the office of dogmatics simply to reproduce and defend the accepted doctrines of the Church. This was the conception in the seventeenth century." Anyone familiar with the theologians of the seventeenth century knows that they take Christian doctrine directly from Scripture and give reasons for it, which is, after all, what modern theologians charge them with doing wrong ("intellectualism," etc.). Milton Valentine's Dogmatics can serve as a proof of how successfully the General Synod resisted not only the influence of the Missouri Synod, but also the efforts of Dr. Krauth. Valentine represents pretty much all the aberrations of modern theology in binding with Arminian Reformed zealotry. He rejects the inspiration of Scripture and the vicarious penal suffering of Christ. He weakens the doctrine of original sin, rejects *mere passive*, and adopts human will as the third cause of conversion (free self-decision). Infants cannot believe and are saved without their own faith. Heathens are saved "if they lived according to the light afforded them" (II, 405 ff.). — We have a compendium of dogmatics written in English with consistently correct biblical content in D. A. L. Gräbner's († 1904) *Outlines of Doctrinal Theology* (1898). These *Outlines* are, as the author says in the preface, "a brief thetical compendium of the outlines of Christian doctrine, consisting of concise definitions and an array of texts from which the various points of doctrine are derived as from *their theological source, the written Word of God*." That quotations from the symbolic books are not included "must not be construed into a disparagement of the Lutheran standards or of any point of doctrine contained therein. With an emphatic refusal to apologize for having nowhere, from the first point in Bibliology to the last in Eschatology, progressed beyond the theology of our Orthodox fathers, and with the fervent prayer that God would

As for the influence of the "strictly confessional trend" of the American Lutheran Church on the Lutheran Church in other countries, General Superintendent [\[Hans Heinrich Philipp Justus\] Ruperti](#) wrote on the occasion of Walther's death: ⁶⁵⁶⁾ "With Walther one of the greats in the Church of Christ has gone home, a man who was not only an epoch-making personality in the church history of America and the outstanding leader and gatherer of Lutherans there, but whose effectiveness in the Lutheran Church of all parts of the world was felt to be a powerfully stimulating one. The success of his effectiveness is almost unparalleled in the recent history of our church." Here, too, as far as the influence on the German Church is concerned, a qualifying remark is in order. The fathers of the Missouri Synod were truly in no haste to break off intercourse with the Church of Germany. Just as they ceaselessly endeavored to communicate with the various Lutheran synods in this country by offering preliminary discussions, ⁶⁵⁷⁾ so they repeatedly sought communication with the church circles of Germany and other countries. ⁶⁵⁸⁾ Admittedly, little by little, especially with the Church of Germany, alienation set in, as Delitzsch points out in the above-mentioned letter. We, for our part, have maintained the binding insofar as we have taken careful note of the church events in Germany, especially also of the literary phenomena. Perhaps the [68 volumes of "Lehre und Wehre"](#) and [the 78 volumes of "Lutheraner"](#) offer the richest contemporary history of the church, covering the whole world, that exists at present. On the other hand, the German theological world, on the one hand, has not yet fully understood our — after all not insignificant — church literature

graciously keep him and his brethren in the faith from any such progress, this humble contribution toward the theological literature of our Church in America is dedicated to the service of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and commended to His divine blessing."

656) [250] [Allgem. Ev.-Luth. Kirchenzeitung](#) of July 22, 1887 [vol. 20; see [Christian Cyclopedia entry](#)].

657) At present, doctrinal discussions are again being held between representatives of the Synodical Conference and representatives of the Synods of Iowa and Ohio. The proceedings are not hopeless, although complete agreement on doctrines has not yet been reached.

658) It should also be noted that Lutheran church fellowships, which agree with the Synodical Conference in doctrine and practice, exist in other countries: in Germany the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Saxony and elsewhere (with congregations in Denmark), in Australia and New Zealand the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Australia, in Alsace the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church in Alsace.

and, on the other hand, quite carefully observed and further spread the evil things which are communicated to the world from the opposing camp about our "strictly confessional trend", e.g. about our alleged Calvinism, about our idolatry of the dogmatists and our desecration of the dogmatists, about our unity and about our mutual hostilities, about democratic bondage of the pastors on the part of the congregations etc.⁶⁵⁹) Unfortunately, we have been met with the same bitterness on the part of the theologians of Germany that we have been met with in this country — to the great regret of Dr. Krauth — on the part of the representatives of liberal "American Lutheranism." And we can understand that. We are separated theologically by a gulf so wide and deep that it cannot be bridged. We hold the Holy Scriptures to be God's infallible Word, and therefore the only source and standard of theology, so that we reject any thought which, to use Luther's phrase, does not have its "arrival" from the Scriptures, may the thought relate to the content or context of Christian doctrine. Modern theologians, on the other hand, regard the "identification" of Scripture and "the Word of God" as a dismissed point of view which has its representatives only in "lay circles" and among theological "latecomers." They therefore see their calling in presenting the product of their "pious self-awareness" to the church and the world and then correcting the fallible Scriptures. With "lay circles" and theological laggards we could come to an understanding. With theological supermen who have taken their stand above Scripture, communication is impossible because the fellowship Christian basis is lacking. However, God's grace can bring about change on this point, too, amidst the tremendous upheavals that are currently sweeping through the entire world.

Will the "strictly confessional trend" of the Lutheran Church, as represented here in the United States by the Synodical Conference, be able to hold its own here and in other countries? The question of the viability of the church of the Reformation in its unchanged and unchanging doctrinal form has recently been considered many times in Germany and other countries. What is to be said here can be roughly summarized in the following

659) [252] [*Kurtz, Kirchengeschichte für Studierende*](#), 1890, II, [2, p. 262](#). RE.² IX, 85 f. Partial correction RE.² XVIII, 687 ff.

points: 1. It does not stand in our discretion whether we want to remain with the doctrine of the Lutheran Church as it is testified in its confession or not. This doctrine coincides in all matters with the doctrine of Christ, which we have in the word of His apostles and prophets,⁶⁶⁰⁾ and no other doctrine is permitted in the Christian Church until the Last Day. Inasmuch as anyone does not abide by the sound words of Christ, he is darkened and ignorant, because no man knows anything of God and divine things beyond God's Word.⁶⁶¹⁾ Orthodoxy belongs to the God-ordained form of the Christian Church on earth. Admittedly, anyone who has not recognized the Lutheran doctrine as witnessed in the Confession of the Church as being in accordance with Scripture cannot advocate this doctrine. But this lack of recognition does not change the fact that the Lutheran Church of the Reformation is the church of pure doctrine, that is, doctrine according to the Scriptures, as is abundantly evident from the Scriptural evidence given in the Confession itself. The Lutheran church in its original, unchanging doctrinal form should therefore not appear timidly in the world, as if it had to ask for an apology for still existing, but by God's grace should stand before the church and the world with the confidence that comes from the knowledge of divine truth based on abiding by the word of the apostles and prophets. 2 The history of the Church shows that by God's grace and power a Church that abides in the unchanging Word of God's prophets and apostles is viable. The church at Jerusalem remained constant in the doctrines of the apostles, and the Lord added to the congregation daily those who were saved.⁶⁶²⁾ The church of the Reformation also stood its ground against the whole world by the position marked by the axiom "Let the word stand". And as for the American Lutheran Church, the "strictly confessional trend" has been predicted an imminent demise both on the part of the Reformed sects and on the part of liberal "American Lutheranism." The counsel was universally given to the fathers of the Missouri Synod to abandon "symbol theology" and adopt instead the customary "revival method" if they held dear the life of their church fellowship. Our fathers were not misled by this. They fought the human goings-on of revivalism in every form and insisted on teaching, in a calm

660) Jn. 8:31; 17:20; Eph. 2:20; 1 Cor. 14:37; 2 Cor. 13:3

661) 1 Tim. 6:3 ff.

662) Acts 2:42, 47; 4:4; 5:14; 11:21; 14:1

and clear manner, publicly and especially, in the home, in the school, in the church and in its higher institutions of learning, the pure divine truth as it is revealed in God's infallible Word and is present as a confession in the symbols of the Lutheran church. And God has allowed the "Repristination Theology" of our fathers to gain space in this country as well, despite fierce opposition. But whether successful or not, God has commanded His Church to proclaim His Word to the world without subtraction or addition. That is as far as the church's responsibility goes. Success stands in God's hands. In this spirit, by God's grace, the whole Synodical Conference in this country is united and active in the church. To this end, of course, God must give and sustain teachers who not only have the necessary training, but are also educated in the school of the Holy Spirit, so that they know from their own experience how indispensably necessary it is for the church to hold steadfastly to *sola gratia* and *sola Scriptura*. Modern theology has unfortunately abandoned both truths. Finally, a summary characterization of modern theology includes a reference to its Reformed character in contrast to the Lutheran Church. Modern theology walks not in Lutheran but in Reformed paths. Schleiermacher's method, which seeks to draw Christian doctrine not from the Scriptures but from pious self-consciousness or Christian "experience," is the method of Zwingli and Calvin, inasmuch as both taught an immediate efficacy of the Holy Spirit not bound to the external word of Scripture. That Zwingli and Calvin did not consistently carry out their theological principle contrary to Scripture is explained partly by the powerful influence of Luther, partly by the fact that they were thrown back by practice on the Lutheran doctrine of the means of grace, in contradiction with their actual theological principle of the immediate efficacy of the Holy Spirit. We have no quarrel with Reformed theology in regard to the external arrangement of Christian doctrines within the *corpus doctrinae*. In fact, Reformed theologians follow both the synthetic and analytical methods.⁶⁶³⁾

 663) Calvin has in his *Institutiones* (final editing 1559) the transparent outer arrangement: *I. De cognitione Dei Creatoris. II. De cognitione Dei Redemptoris. III. De modo percipiendae Christi gratiae. IV. De externis mediis vel adminiculis.*

Even according to the federal method, the Christian doctrine could be presented completely according to the Scriptures. What we have against Reformed theology is this, that in all doctrines by which it differs from the Lutheran Church, and whereupon the Reformed Church has constituted itself alongside the Lutheran Church, it denies the Scripture Principle and allows rationalistic axioms to prevail. This has already been stated under the section "The Cause of Parties within Outer Christendom."⁶⁶⁴

21. The attainment of theological aptitude. [^](#)

Luther writes in the preface to the first part of his German books in 1539:⁶⁶⁵ "I will indicate to you a proper way to study theology, which I have practiced; where you hold the same, you shall be taught so that you yourself could (where it would be necessary) even make as good books as the Fathers and Concilia. As I may (in God) also presume and boast without arrogance and lies, that I would not have much preceded some of the fathers, if it should apply to bookmaking; of life I can boast far not equally."⁶⁶⁶ And this is the way that the holy King David (no doubt also held by all patriarchs and prophets) teaches in the 119th Psalm; there you will find three rules inside, abundantly presented through the whole Psalm, and called thus: *Oratio, meditatio, tentatio*." Matthias Hafenreffer, professor of theology and chancellor of the University of Tübingen († 1619), places this axiom of Luther at the beginning of his Dogmatics,⁶⁶⁷ while at the same time further expounding it on the basis of Scripture and applying it to the circumstances of the time. Among the

 664) Shedd, because he suffers from the same disease as Calvin, denies the setting aside of the Scriptural principle in Calvin: "The systematic theology of Calvin's *Institutes* is exclusively Biblical in its constituent elements and substance. Calvin borrows hardly anything from human philosophy, science, or literature. His appeal is made continually to the Scriptures alone. No theologian was ever less influenced by a school of philosophy or by human science and literature than the Genevan reformer. Dogmatic theology, as he constructed it, is as Scriptural a theology as can be found in the ancient or modern Church." (*Dogmatic Theology*, I, 12.) We have provided documentary evidence to the contrary, loc. cit.

665) [St. L. XIV, 434 ff.](#)

666) Walther used to add to these words, "O humble Luther!"

667) *Loci Theologici*. Tübingae 1601, 1603, 1606 and more.

theologians of the last century Rudelbach († 1862) expressed himself about Luther's instruction for the study of theology in an address: "You know the great word of Luther: *Oratio, meditatio, tentatio faciunt theologum*. In this word our whole theological methodology is contained. There is nothing to be added here and nothing to be taken away, as with every thought sealed by the Spirit of God." ⁶⁶⁸⁾ Without a doubt, if Luther's methodology were followed everywhere, the plight of the church, insofar as it lacks proper doctrines, would soon come to an end.

Luther himself declares about the necessity of the *oratio*: "First of all, you should know that the Holy Scriptures are such a book, which makes wisdom of all other books foolish, because none teaches about eternal life without this alone. Therefore, you should despair of your mind and intellect, for you will not attain it with them, but with such presumption you will fall yourself and others with you from heaven (as Lucifer did) into the abyss of hell, but kneel down in your closet and pray to God with true humility and earnestness that He may give you His Holy Spirit through His dear Son to enlighten you, guide you and give you understanding. As you see that David always asks in the above Psalm: Teach me, Lord, instruct me, guide me, show me! and many more words, even though he was able to read and listen to the text of Moses and other books every day; nor does he want to have the right Lord of the Scriptures himself, so that he does not fall into error with reason and become his own master. For there are the spirits of the riffraff [Rottengeister], who make themselves believe that the Scriptures are subject to them and can easily be obtained by their reason, as if they were Marcolfus' or Aesop's fables, since they have no right to the Holy Spirit or to prayer." What Luther says here about the necessity of *oratio* is based on the conviction, worked by the Holy Spirit, that the Holy Scriptures are a book like no other in the world. It is God's own majestic Word. That is why it is the only book that teaches about eternal life, because all the world is caught in *opinio legis*. If other books also teach about eternal life, namely teach that salvation is obtained without the works of the law, through faith in Christ's *satisfactio vicaria*, this comes from the Scriptures. And because the Scriptures are God's own Word,

⁶⁶⁸⁾ Quoted in Walther, *Pastoral Theology*, [p. 9](#).

it is fitting for the theologian, as often as he opens the Holy Scriptures, to completely lose his sense and understanding and to ask God for the Holy Spirit, who alone teaches the understanding of the Word of God and works the sense that submits to the Word of Scripture. Without this effect of the Holy Spirit, there is the presumption according to which man places himself above the Scriptures, does not let them be an object of faith, but makes them the object of his criticism, a presumption that leads himself and others to eternal ruin and before that still causes division and separation in the church here on earth. Because modern theology does not consider Scripture to be the Word of God, it naturally places itself not under Scripture but above it. The ego of the theologian becomes the dominant factor, and because the ego of the many individuals is present, the result is not unity in Christian doctrine, but hopeless disunity and factionalism.

Luther says about *meditatio*: "On the other hand, you should meditate, that is, not only in your heart, but also outwardly, the oral address and literal words in the book always working and exercising, reading and rereading, with diligent attention and reflection on what the Holy Spirit means by it. And beware lest thou be weary of it, or think that thou hast read it once or twice enough, and heard it, and said it, and understand it all to the bottom; for there no special theology shall ever come to an end, and are like the untimely fruit that falls off before it is half ripe. Therefore you see in the same psalm how David always boasts that he will speak, write, say, sing, listen, read, day and night and forever, but nothing but God's Word and commandments. For God will not give thee his Spirit without the outward word, therefore judge thyself: for he hath not commanded it in vain to be outwardly written, preached, read, heard, sung, spoken, etc." In this more detailed exposition on *meditatio*, Luther says wherein the study of theology consists, namely, not in reflecting on what the theologizing Ego means by God and divine things, but in reflecting on what the Holy Spirit means and teaches in the "literal" Word of Scripture, which is not the word of men, but of the Holy Spirit. What modern theologians declare unworthy of theology ("legal authority of Scripture") and harmful to piety ("intellectualism"), Luther declares to be the only right way of studying theology. And one must not get tired of this way of doing the "literal words in the book" —

"for no special theologian will ever come out of it" — but you have to stop with this way. Luther does not want the pastor to be "walled off," as Walther used to remark, but rather to study diligently.

Luther's more detailed explanation of the *tentatio* reads as follows: "Third, there is temptation. This is the touchstone that teaches you not only to know and understand, but also to experience how right, how true, how sweet, how lovely, how powerful, how comforting God's doctrine is, wisdom above all wisdom. Therefore you see how David complains in the Psalm mentioned above about all kinds of enemies, unruly princes or tyrants, about false spirits and rabbles that he has to suffer, because he meditates, that is, deals with God's Word (as said) in all kinds of ways. For as soon as the Word of God arises through thee, the devil shall visit thee, and make thee a right doctor, and by his temptation shall teach thee to seek the Word of God, and to love it. For I myself (that I, too, am mixed with the mice droppings) have much to thank my papists for having so crushed, distressed, and terrified me through the devil's ravings, that is, for having made me a pretty good theologian, where I otherwise would not have come. And what they have gained in me, on the other hand, I heartily approve of their honors, victory and triumph, for that is how they wanted it." As far as *tentatio* is concerned, it should be pointed out that Luther's whole theology grew out of *tentatio*, out of *tentatio* from within and without. First came the *tentatio* from within. After years of uncertainty and anguish of conscience under the Roman doctrine of works, God led him to the knowledge of the gospel of the free grace of God in Christ. Thus he experienced in his own heart and conscience "how right, how true, how sweet, how lovely, how powerful, how comforting is the Word of God, wisdom above all wisdom." Then came the *tentatio* from without. When Luther taught the Word of God, the papacy, indeed the whole world, got in his way and declared him to have lost both eternal and temporal life. In this challenge, he again learned to "seek and love the Word of God," with such success that he could say, "Here I stand, I can do no other!" Thus Luther became "a pretty good theologian" by way of temptation. And let us not deceive ourselves! In our time, too, theological aptitude is attained only by the way that we, in the temptation that comes from within

and without, are driven to the Word of Scripture and hold on to it as the only immutable divine greatness in the world. The whole of the newer scientific theology is designed in the opposite way. Its way is not to bring consciences struck by the law of God to rest with God's Word and to oppose God's Word, the "wisdom above all wisdom," to the wisdom of the world, but it is designed to satisfy "intellectual needs" and to harmonize the Christian doctrine with the "modern world view."

Finally, Luther describes how adherence to the doctrine produces in the theologian the things that are so necessary to him, namely, grateful joy in the doctrine, joyful confidence that he can teach young and old and all kinds of people, persistent and growing humility, whereby the pernicious, ever-threatening pride is resisted, which causes so much destruction within oneself and outwardly. Luther thus concludes, "Behold, there you have David's rule. If you now study this example, you will also sing and praise with him in the same psalm! Ps. 119:72: he Law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver'; again, vv. 98-100: Thou through Thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies; for they are ever with me. I am more learned than all my teachers, for your testimonies are my meditation. I am wiser than the ancients, for I keep thy commands, etc. And you will learn how stale and rotten the books of the fathers will taste to you, you will not only despise the books of the adversaries, but you yourself will like both in writing and doctrines the longer the less. When you have come here, hope confidently that you have begun to become a true theologian, who may teach not only the young, imperfect Christians, but also the growing and perfect ones; for Christ's church has all kinds of Christians in it, young, old, weak, sick, healthy, strong, fresh, lazy, silly, wise, etc. But if thou feelest and letest thyself think that thou hast certainly, and tickleest thyself with thine own little books, doctrines, or writings, as if thou hadst made it very precious, and preachedst excellently; if thou likest also very much to be praised before others, if thou wouldest perhaps be praised, or else thou wouldest become depressed and lose interest: if you have that sort of a pelt, ⁶⁶⁹⁾ dear, grab thine own ears, and if thou grab them right,

669) Hafenreffer, *Loci* 1606, p. 18, transl: *Huius farinae es?* Are you of this nature?

you will find a beautiful pair of large, long, rough ass's ears; then risk the full cost and decorate yourself with golden bells, so that, wherever you walk, people can hear you, point you out, and say: "Look, look! There goes that wonderful creature that can write such fine books and deliver such eloquent sermons! Then thou art saved and blessed in the kingdom of heaven; yea, since the infernal fire is prepared for the devil with his angels! Summa, let us seek honor and be haughty wherever we may. In this book, God's is the glory alone, and [it] says: *Deus superbis resistit, humilibus autem dat gratiam. Cui est gloria in secula seculorum. Amen.*" [Ed. - "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. To whom is glory for ever and ever"] We would like to give counsel to all theologians, and those who want to become theologians, to read Luther's theological methodology repeatedly, in order to follow it by God's grace all the way.

Holy Scriptures. ^ (De Scriptura Sacra.)

1. The Holy Scriptures are for the Church of our time the only source and norm of Christian doctrines. ^

However, the Christian Church is older than the Holy Scriptures, that is, older than the written Word of God. Except for Moses, God brought the church into existence and preserved it through His Word taught orally (*viva voce*). The Christian Church came into existence immediately after the Fall, when God, after orally punishing sin⁶⁷⁰⁾, gave orally to the human race the promise of the woman's seed, which was to destroy the work of the devil, that is, to cancel man's guilt of sin and all the consequence of it, ⁶⁷¹⁾ and Adam and Eve believed the "first gospel". Through the Word of God proclaimed orally, in many ways, the Church of the following times has been preserved and spread up to Moses.⁶⁷²⁾ However, since God

670) Gen. 3:8-14.

671) Gen. 3:15.

672) Gen. 4:26 should be noted. In the words: "At that time they began to preach the Lord's name," there is obviously a reference to assemblies for the proclamation and hearing of the Word of God. Cf. Luther z. St., I, 398 ff. Likewise J. P. Lange on this passage. Also Calov, *Bibi. Illust*, 3rd st: *De initio praeconii publici plerique accipiunt*. Lukas

chose the written communication of His Word, the respective church was strictly bound to the Word of God recorded in writing.⁶⁷³⁾ No man was permitted to add to or subtract from the Word of God given in writing.⁶⁷⁴⁾ Thus, for the Old Testament Church, the written Word of God was a complete canon to which only God added from time to time.⁶⁷⁵⁾ To the church of the New Testament, God

Osiander on this passage: *Cultus ante natum Enos minus sollemniter et quasi privatim exercebantur.* [Google] Further it is reported that God spoke with Noah (ch. 6 ff.), with Abraham (ch. 12 ff.) and so on. And these do not keep the Word of God communicated to them to themselves. Abraham is called a "prophet" (20:4), and also of him it is expressly reported (13:4) that he preached of the Lord's name. The "name of the Lord" is, in the first place, the name of the Lord κατ' ἐξοχὴν namely, that by which God has made Himself a name among the guilty human race: the redemption of the human race from the guilt of sin and the consequences thereof through the seed of woman, Christ. The testimony that Peter, Acts 10:43, to all the prophets of the Old Testament also covers the passages Gen. 4:26; 13:4, etc.

673) To the question, what probably moved God to let the written fixation of his Word take the place of the oral proclamation, Baier answers (1, 106): 1. *multiplicato genere humano*; 2. *vitaevero humanae spatio abbreviato, non aequae ut olim a patriarchis immediata revelatione Dei instructis viva voce coram instrui poterant omnes homines, sed et 3. invecis variis doctrinae corruptelis, accedente 4. hominum informandorum infirmitate et memoriae imbecillitate, ut tamen praesto esset revelatio, ad quam in omni necessitatis casu secure confugi posset, littera scripta non abs re desiderabatur.* [Google] If it has been objected that the almighty and all-wise God could have continued to teach and preserve his church even without written communication of his Word of God, we say with Baier: *Divinae providentiae consultissimum visum est, capita divinarum revelationum scripto comprehendere* ["It seemed most prudent to divine providence, that the chapters of the divine revelations should be included in writing"] — God has willed it so. Moreover, we know that God is the God of love towards the fallen human race, and that therefore, just as the gift of His incarnate Son (John 3:16), so also the gift of His written Word enters into the service of the saving love of sinners (2 Timothy 3:15-17). The children of God gratefully acknowledge this (Ps. 119) and guard against the sin of setting aside the written Word of God, or even directly denying that it is the unbreakable divine truth. Expressed according to the causal method: *Causa impulsiva consignatae ex voluntate divina Scripturae Sacrae interna est bonitas Dei, externa (προκαταρκτική) hominum salvandorum indigentia.* ["The impulsive cause consigned from the divine will of the Holy Scriptures is the internal goodness of God, the external (προκαταρκτική) need of men to be saved."] (Baier 1, 105.) That Scripture, however, has no *necessitas absoluta*, is also said by the old Lutheran theologians, and is to be explained in more detail in the use of Scripture.

674) Jos. 23:6; Deut. 4:2.

675) Quenstedt I, 51: *Distinguendum inter tempora ante et post Moysen, sive inter revelationem, quae divinitus facta est patriarchis et sine*

then added to the word of the prophets the word of the apostles as the foundation of faith. The church of the New Testament is said to be "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets".⁶⁷⁶⁾ This coordination of the word of the apostles and the word of the prophets is due to the fact that one and the same Spirit of Christ spoke, as through the prophets of the Old Testament, so also through the apostles of the New Testament. "They" — the prophets, in whom was "the Spirit of Christ" — "presented it not to themselves, but to us, which now" — at the time of the New Testament — "is preached unto you by them which preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven." ⁶⁷⁷⁾ With the Word of the apostles of the New Testament, however, the teaching revelation of God to His Church is completely finished. When Christ says in the high priestly prayer: "I do not pray for them alone" — the apostles — "but also for those who will believe in me through their word" — the word of the apostles — he thereby declares the word of his apostles to be the basis of faith of the whole Christian Church until the Last Day. The fact that through the ministry of hundreds of thousands, who are not apostles, men become faithful in Christ, is due to the fact that the hundreds of thousands, even millions, do not proclaim their own word, but the word of the apostles and prophets. We again put Luther's remark to David's words:

scripturarum adminiculo per annos 2454, iuxta calculum Calvinianum, ab initio videlicet mundi usque ad Mosen viva voce fuit propagata; et revelationem, quae a Mose et prophetis literis est consignata. Illa theologiae principium fuit usque ad Mosen, haec post Mosen. Statim enim post primum canonem constitutum, qui ex Pentateucho, libro lobi et cantico Mosis constabat, non amplius revelatio viva voce tradita, sed sola illa, quae literis erat consignata, religionis norma fuit ac principium. [Google] To the Scriptures of the Old Testament as a complete canon for the church of the Old Testament Christ also points Luke 16:29 with the words: "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them."

676) Eph. 2:20. Stöckhardt on this passage [[Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians](#), p. xxx; [English ed.](#) — p. 153]: "The apostles come into consideration here not according to their personal nature and character, but according to their official activity, precisely as apostles, and that in their relationship to the church of all times. ... The apostles have long since died (in our time), but still live on and speak to us in their writings. ... And so the second genitive, προφητῶν, can only refer to the Old Testament prophets and the writings of the prophets, which stand on the same level as the apostolic writings and form one genus with them, hence ἀποστόλων and προφητῶν are included under one article."

677) 1 Petr. 1:10-12.

"The Spirit of the Lord has spoken through me" (2 Sam. 23:2) here: "We may not yet lead anyone to such glory who is not a prophet. This we may do, provided we also be holy and have the Holy Spirit, that we catechumens and disciples of the prophets may boast ourselves, as those who repeat and preach what we have heard and learned from the prophets and apostles, and are also certain that the prophets taught it. These are called in the Old Testament the 'prophets children,' who set nothing of their own nor new, as the prophets do, but teach what they have from the prophets, and are 'Israel,' as David says, to whom he makes the Psalms." ⁶⁷⁸⁾

It can only be asked where the New Testament church of the apostles finds word for sure. The apostles themselves refer us to their writings for this question. First, they declare their written word to be identical in content with their verbally proclaimed word. The apostle John says: "What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you (ἀπαγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν) ..., and such we write to you (γράφομεν ὑμῖν)." ⁶⁷⁹⁾ So also according to the content Paul coordinates his oral and his written word: "Hold to the statutes which ye are taught, whether by our word or epistle," εἴτε διὰ λόγου, εἴτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ἡμῶν. ⁶⁸⁰⁾ Although not all that Christ and the apostles taught orally is written. ⁶⁸¹⁾ yet the instruction in the apostles' doctrines is not merely abundant but superabundant, because in them one and the same thing is said not merely once but many times. "That I always write to you one and the same (τά αὐτά, the same) does not vex me and makes you the more certain." ⁶⁸²⁾ On the other hand, we see that the apostles already urge very firmly the sola Scriptura. In the apostolic church, the same series of pseudo sources of knowledge and pseudo norms that later and until our time have plagued Christianity, namely alleged prophethood or "spirit," alleged apostleship or "tradition," and alleged letters of the apostles, asserted themselves against the divine authority of the apostles' word. In contrast, Paul points to his written Word as the sure source and norm of true apostolic doctrine. Regarding "prophecy" and "spirit" present in the church at the time of the apostles,

678) St. L. III, 1890.

681) Jn. 21:25.

679) 1 Jn. 1:3. 4. 680) 2 Thess. 2:15.

682) Phil. 3:1.

the apostle prescribes the following behavior to the Christian congregations: They should not absolutely reject the spirit and prophecy, but rather test them, but carry out this test in the absence of the apostle according to the apostle's word. When in the Corinthian congregation prophecy and spirit placed themselves next to and above his apostolic authority, he writes to the congregation: "If any man let himself think that he is a prophet or spiritual (προφήτης εἶναι ἢ πνευματικός), let him recognize" (ἐπιγινώσκέτω, acknowledge, *agnoscat*, namely, as a norm) "what I write to yourselves (γράφω); for they are the Lord's commandments." To this the apostle concludes the words, "But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant," εἰ δε τις ἄγνοεῖ, αγνοεῖτω.⁶⁸³⁾ With this Paul gives the instruction: should anyone who imagines himself to be a prophet or thinks he has the Spirit not recognize what the apostle writes as Christ's commandment, that is, not as a divine norm, he is to be recognized by this behavior as a pseudoprophet and left to himself as an ignoramus. Important is 2 Thess. 2:2, where the apostle opposes his written instruction about the time of Christ's return, as to the "spirit", so also to the alleged apostle's word (tradition) and the alleged apostle's writing. Christians are not to be swayed or even frightened μήτε διά πνεύματος μήτε διά λόγον μήτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ὡς δι' ἡμῶν.⁶⁸⁴⁾ In order for the congregations to distinguish genuine apostolic writing from the alleged, imputed one, Paul writes the greeting in his own hand in his letters.⁶⁸⁵⁾

The Scripture Principle is rejected and instead the human ego is elevated to the chair in the Christian Church:

683) 1 Cor. 14:37, 38.

684) Lünemann: Ως δι' ἡμῶν is to be bound with διά λόγον as well as with δι' ἐπιστολῆς, and the former is to be understood from oral statements, which one imputed to the apostle, the latter from written statements, which one imputed to him by means of a fictitious letter. On the other hand, to refer also to διά πνεύματος with Erasmus ὡς δι' ἡμῶν is impossible, since λόγοι and ἐπιστολαί could well be circulated as coming from an absent one, but not enthusiastic prophetic discourses, since in such the personal presence of the speaker was necessary." Also v. 15, Pauli λόγος and ἐπιστολή are bound together, εἴτε διά λόγον, εἴτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ἡμῶν.

685) 2 Thess. 3:17: "The greeting with my hand Pauli; this is the sign (σημεῖον) in all letters; so (οὕτω) I write."

1. By calling on natural reason. Under the expression "natural reason" we deal here with all that which man knows and can know of God and divine things apart from the revelation of Holy Scriptures. It has already been stated under various relations that this natural knowledge of God and divine things is limited to a knowledge of God's existence and divine Law, and that this knowledge leaves men under God's wrath and curse because they cannot keep God's law. Of the Gospel of Christ, which promises forgiveness of sins for the sake of Christ's *satisfactio vicaria* and forms the essential content of the Christian religion, no thought has ever entered the heart of man.⁶⁸⁶⁾ It has already been explained that this ignorance applies not only to the uneducated mankind, but also to the elite of it, especially also to the trained reason of the philosophers.⁶⁸⁷⁾ Whoever, therefore, in matters of the Christian religion appeals to natural reason, and seeks to draw and standardize from it, wholly or in part, the Christian doctrine, commits a μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος, and makes an attempt to place human unreason in the place of the Word of God in the chair of the Christian Church. This is done by the Unitarians of all ages, who openly confess that for "reasons of reason" they reject the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, of the metaphysical deity of Christ, and of the *satisfactio vicaria*, as will be demonstrated more fully in the exposition of these doctrines. The Unitarians stand *extra ecclesiam*. This is further done by all those who, within the Christian Church, reject individual parts of the Christian doctrines on grounds of natural reason. It has already been shown that the Reformed Church substitutes rationalistic axioms for the Scriptural principle in the doctrines by which it differs from the Lutheran Church and has divided Protestant Christianity.⁶⁸⁸⁾ Also, it has already been pointed out that nothing other than rationalism is the mother of both Synergism (denial of *sola gratia*) and Calvinism (denial of *universalis gratia*).⁶⁸⁹⁾ Both in Scripture and in profane usage, the word "reason" has yet another

686) 1 Cor. 2:6ff.

687) Cf. on the philosophical concept of religion p. 16 ff.

688) p. 25 ff. 689) p. 34.

meaning. It also denotes being rational, that is, the human ability to take something given into the mind and to consider it in the mind. This is the so-called *usus rationis ministerialis* (*organicus*) in contrast to the *usus rationis magisterialis*. The use of reason in the sense of the *usus ministerialis* naturally also takes place in theology, because the Holy Spirit only works and sustains faith through the Word of God received into the human spirit. This use of reason is therefore also very emphatically inculcated in Scripture. Rom. 10:14: Πώς πιστευσονσιν ον ονκ ήκονσαν;. Rom. 10:17: Η πίστις έξ ακοής. Jn. 5:39: Ερευνάτε τάς γραφάς. Matt. 24:15: Ο αναγινώσκων [what is said in the prophet Daniel of the abomination of desolation] νοείτω. The example of Mary, Luke 2:19: "Mary kept (συνετήρει) all these words and moved them (συμβάλλουσα) in her heart." Part of this *usus instrumentalis* of reason, that is, of hearing, receiving, and considering the words of Scripture, is that we adhere to the laws of language (grammar) and human laws of thought (logic) present in Scripture, because in Holy Scriptures God has entered into human language and into human ways of thinking. God, as Luther repeatedly reminds us, "became man" in Holy Scriptures (*Scriptura Sacra est Deus incarnatus*). In this sense, the axiom applies: *theologia debet esse grammatica*, that is, the theologian who wants to recognize and teach the doctrine revealed in Scripture must adhere very precisely to the use of language present in Scripture itself. In Luther, especially in the polemical parts of his writings, the remark recurs that anyone who is lacking in grammar must also necessarily be lacking in theology. The same can be said of the orthodox Lutheran dogmatists. As resolutely as they reject reason as a principle of theology on the one hand, so resolutely do they urge the *usus instrumentalis* of reason on the other. To this they also count the whole philological and logical apparatus, as long as it merely serves the understanding of the content of Scripture and does not set any content of its own. Quenstedt says:⁶⁹⁰⁾ *Distinguendum inter rationem passive sumptam pro subiecto informationis et acceptam normaliter pro principio probationis. . . . Illa in quavis*

690) *Systema* I, 55 ff.

*rerum et sic quoque divinarum cognitione necessaria est ut principium quo, non enim nisi intellectu seu ratione homo intelligit; haec vero in rerum divinarum cognitione ut principium quod non admittitur. . . . Sine usu rationis seu intellectus nemo in theologia versari potest; neque enim brutis aut animalibus rationis expertibus proponenda est theologia. Uti itaque homo sine oculis non potest videre, sine auribus non potest audire, sine lingua non potest gustare, ita sine ratione, sine qua ne quidem homo est, non potest percipere, quae fides (quam „animam animae” appellat Augustinus, sermo 250. de tempore) περιφερέα sua complectitur. [Google] . . . Distinguendum inter principia organica, qualia sunt grammatica, logica, rhetorica, studium linguarum etc., et principia philosophica stricte dicta. Illa in theologia adhibenda sunt (utpote adminicula theologiae acquirendae), cum sine illis nec sensus aut significatio vocum erui (quod grammaticae), nec figurae modique loquendi expendi (quod rhetoricae), nec connexiones et consequentiae percipi, nec discursus institui (quod logicae est) possint. Bene D. Balth. Meisnerus Disput, de Calvinismo fugiendo, th. 83.: „Ratione suo modo utendum esse in rebus theologicis, quis nostrum umquam negavit? Annon utimur ipsi, quoties vel proprietatem linguae vel structuram totius contextus attendimus? Ex auditu est fides, Rom. 10, 18, Ad auditum vero usus rationis requiritur, ut vox a voce discernatur et aliquis sensus percipiatur. [Google] Sic in confirmando, in destruendo, in exponendo rationis usum necessarium esse, non imus inficias, quia in omnibus τρόπος παιδείας et modus in logicis praescriptus observari debet.” Distinguendum inter rationis ministerium, cum instar ancillae cedit herae seu dominae (ex antiqua comparatione Ambrosii, 2. de Abrahamo, c. 10.), et rationis magisterium, cum sibi iudicium arrogat de rebus ignotis et supra captum positis. . . . Distinguendum inter rationem sibi relictam sive iuxta principia sua naturalia iudican-tem, et rationem intra Verbi divini orbem conclusam et castigatam sive e Sacra Scriptura illustratam. Hanc de rebus fidei iudicare posse, non negamus; illi autem iudicium de rebus fidei competere, inficiamur. [Google] (L. c., f. 55 sqq.) By distinguishing between the *usus rationis ministerialis* and *magisterialis*, the ancient theologians also decide the question whether there is a real contradiction between theology and reason or human science (philosophy). They answer: The truth is only one. A contradiction comes out only*

when reason, which has become mad, takes the liberty of passing judgment on things that are beyond its domain. Quenstedt writes: ⁶⁹¹⁾ *Obiiciunt adversarii: religionem multa habere supra, nihil vero contra rationem. Resp. 1.: Articuli fidei in se non sunt contra rationem, sed solum supra rationem; per accidens vero iit, ut sint etiam contra rationem, quando ratio iudicium sibi de illis sumit ex suis principiis, nec sequitur lucem Verbi, sed eosdem negat et impugnat. 2. Articuli fidei non sunt solum supra, sed et contra rationem corruptam et depravatam, quae illos stultitiam esse iudicat. Instat Smalzius, Disp. IV. contra Franz., p. 137: „Doceat quis unam sententiam sacrarum literarum pugnare cum ratione, et tunc ratio taceat in ecclesia.” Eesp.: Cum ratione in terminis suis sese cōtinente nulla sacrarum literarum sententia pugnat, sed cum ratione terminos suos egrediente omnia fidei mysteria pugnant, ut trinitatis, incarnationis etc. [Google] We must not conceal from ourselves, of course, that the struggle which men wage, calling on their reason (science), against Scripture and the Christian religion will never cease, because the natural man (ψυχικός άνθρωπος, 1 Cor. 2:14) is God's enemy (ἐχθρὰ εἰς θεόν, Rom. 8:7) and especially considers and can consider the essence of Christianity, the gospel, only foolishness (μωρία αὐτῷ ἐστὶν καὶ οὐ δύναται γνῶναι, 1 Cor. 2:14). In this situation it will not fail that, as long as a man has not become a Christian by *contritio* and *fides*, he will assert both his entire ignorance and his limited knowledge in the natural field against Holy Scriptures and Christian doctrine. Quenstedt says in regard to this point:⁶⁹²⁾ *Distinguendum inter philosophiam abstracte et ratione suae essentiae consideratam et philosophiam concrete et ratione existentiae in subiecto per peccatum corrupto spectatam. Priori modo veritati divinae nequaquam opponitur, non enim nisi unica ... et ratione obiectorum sibi invicem subordinatorum harmonica datur veritas; posteriori vero modo ob intellectus ignorantiam et voluntatis perversionem non raro ad depravationem et inanem deceptionem a philosopho praepostere adhibetur, Col. 2, 8. [Google]**

2. By calling on born-again reason or its numerous synonyms such as: pious self-consciousness, Christian experience, Christian ego, faith consciousness, faith,

691) *Systema* I, 62.

692) *Systema* I, 63.

Spirit, etc. It has already been demonstrated in detail that all these sources and norms — apart from the scriptural word and detached from the scriptural word — are based on self-deception.⁶⁹³⁾ We had to call it an insult to the new or born-again man to ascribe to him the folly of teaching from within himself, disregarding the Word of Scripture. Where this happens, it is not the new man who is doing theology, but the old man. The new man recognizes the Scriptures as God's infallible Word⁶⁹⁴⁾ and adheres to the general rule in force in the Christian church: "If anyone speaks, let him speak it as the Word of God."⁶⁹⁵⁾ As soon as the new man really reflects on himself, he recognizes the impulse to teach from his own ego instead of from the doctrines of Scripture as an erroneous, even godless self-consciousness, for which he asks God for forgiveness. According to the process of Luther and the old Lutheran theologians, Walther also incessantly inculcated this. He wrote, for example: "Even the enlightened and reborn reason cannot be a principle of knowledge apart from the Scriptures, which are coordinated with it, since it belongs to the essence of an enlightened or reborn reason that it does not make itself but the Scriptures its principle of knowledge in matters of faith, 2 Cor. 10:5, apart from the fact that there is no completely renewed and reborn reason in any human being here. No completely renewed and enlightened reason is to be found in any man, Gen. 18:10-15."⁶⁹⁶⁾ In short, the effort on the part of modern theology to elevate the "born-again ego" to the principle of knowledge of Christian doctrine, while at the same time rejecting Scripture as the Word of God and as the sole source and norm of theology, amounts in fact to an effort to place the natural human ego, the flesh, on the throne of rulership in the Church. It is under Christian pretense the plain rationalism.

693) S. 73 ff. 694) Jn. 8:47. 695) 1 Petr. 4:11.

696) L. u. W. 13, 99. From this, Quenstedt also points to the Calvinists, who likewise invoked reborn reason as the source and norm of Christian doctrine: *Urgent Calviniani, se intelligere rationem regentam seu rationem humanam post regenerationem spiritualem factam, ut Calvinus, Inst. IV, 17, 26. ... Respondet b. Dannhauerus: Obtineret aliquid haec regestio, si ratio in homine reperiretur pura, sine fontis peccaminosi adhuc residui affluxu; at turbata est aqua, similis aquae dulci, saltem suspecta veneni, cum omne figmentum cordis humani malum sit omni tempore. Et annon Sarah regenta? Et tamen promissum Domini ridet, irridet, ut paradoxum.* [[Google](#)]

Dr. Stöckhardt judged very correctly in a review of Frank's theology:⁶⁹⁷⁾ "Frank's theology, which fights Ritschl's rationalism, is itself only a new kind and edition of rationalism, rationalism in church garb. It is natural reason which in Frank's systems picks apart Christian realities in its own way, dissects them, and in turn binds them, rhymes them together. ... It is a strange thing that Frank's mill of reason has not ground all Christian dogmas short and small, that Frank nevertheless leaves certain elements of Christian truth standing. That is not in the system, that is inconsistency. ... This "I", which decides in its own authority in matters of faith and truth, which makes and sets doctrines, constructs God, heaven and earth and everything arbitrarily out of itself, is basically the "I", the spirit, the inner light of the enthusiast spirits." What is "vaunted by the Spirit" without a scriptural word is never the Holy Spirit. Luther: "The Holy Spirit does not work without the Word and before the Word, but comes with and through the Word and does not go further than the Word goes." ⁶⁹⁸⁾

3. By the demand that the Christian doctrines are to be taken not from the scriptural passages dealing with the individual doctrines (*sedes doctrinae*), but "from the whole of Scripture". This phrase, from which truly no reasonable sense can be derived, has been given a new course by "the reformer of the church of the nineteenth century", Schleiermacher. He says:⁶⁹⁹⁾ "The citing of individual passages of Scripture in dogmatics is something highly deplorable, indeed, in and of itself insufficient." But this meaningless phrase has been adopted by pretty much all the main representatives of modern theology, from the far left to the far right. We find it also in Ihmels⁷⁰⁰⁾ and before that in Hofmann. ⁷⁰¹⁾ In his critique of Hofmann's proof of Scripture, Kliefoth rightly called this opposition between the whole of Scripture and the individual statements of Scripture an "incomprehensible phrase". ⁷⁰²⁾ In fact, it stands that we can only arrive at the whole of Christian doctrine by taking the individual doctrines from the scriptural

697) L. u. W. 42, 74 f. 698) St. L. XI, 1073.

699) Glaubenslehre I, § 30. 700) Central Questions 2, p. 88 f.

701) Schriftbeweis 2 I, 671 ff.

702) The Scriptural Evidence of D. J. Chr. K. von Hofmann, p. 32.

passages — always considered in their context, of course — which deal with the doctrines in question. What is claimed to be the whole of Scripture or the whole of Christian doctrine, disregarding the individual statements of Scripture, is merely a human product. The strange address of the whole of Scripture in contrast to the individual statements of Scripture has been devised in order to completely dull Scripture under the appearance of great Scripturalism and to make room for the theology of the "pious self-consciousness" of the theologizing subject in the church. Kliefoth has warningly reminded us that the "incomprehensible phrase" of the whole of Scripture is not an "innocuous" phrase "when it falls into narrow-minded heads, as examples prove." Kliefoth's expression is strong and ungallant, but not stronger and more ungallant than the expressions we find, e.g., 1 Tim. 6:4: τετόφωτ αι, μηδέν επιοταμένος. As to the matter, it should be added that not only the heads into which that "incomprehensible phrase" fell, but already the heads in which it originated belong to the category of the heads described by Kliefoth. That phrase owes its origin, after all, only to the blindness that can be called the blindness κατ εξοχήν, namely, the blindness in which someone who claims the position of a teacher in the Christian church does not yet recognize, or at least no longer recognizes, God's Word as the Word of God, rejects it as the source and norm of Christian doctrine, and therefore endeavors to substitute in the Christian church for the εις διδασκαλος, which is Christ in His Word,⁷⁰³⁾ the self-consciousness of the theologizing human subject. This not knowing is so great that Christ himself is strange about it: Διά τί την λαλίαν την εμήν ον γινώσκετε;⁷⁰⁴⁾

4. By calling on the church, the doctrinal decisions of the church (councils, synods), the pope etc. According to Scripture, it stands that the Christian Church has no doctrine of its own at all, namely, no doctrine apart from Christ's Word. Christ is her εις διδασκαλος, εις καθηγητής.⁷⁰⁵⁾ She is commanded to teach Christ's doctrines.⁷⁰⁶⁾ She has Christ's word in the word of his apostles and prophets,⁷⁰⁷⁾ and by that word she remains on

703) Matt. 23:8; Jn. 8:31-32. 704) Jn. 8:43.

705) Matt. 23:8. 10.

706) Matt. 28:20: πάντα δσα ενετειλάμην υμῖν'.

707) Jn. 17:20; Eph. 2:20; 1 Petr. 1:10-12.




Christ's explicit instruction.⁷⁰⁸⁾ Insofar as the church does not stick to Christ's word, but teaches the doctrines of men, it falls out of its calling and "babbles," as Luther crudely puts it.⁷⁰⁹⁾ The teachers who do not bring Christ's doctrine or, what is the same, the doctrine of the apostles, are not to be treated as fellow believers, but are to be carefully and resolutely avoided as sectarians.⁷¹⁰⁾ That the voice of the church and the voice of Holy Scriptures are not two different voices, but one and the same voice, Luther took powerfully against Erasmus when the latter offered to submit his meaning to the church, even if it did not reach the meaning of Scripture. Luther reproaches him: "What are you saying, Erasmus? Is it not enough to submit the sense of Scripture? Do you also subject it to the decisions of the church? What can the Church decide that has not been decided beforehand in Scripture?"⁷¹¹⁾ The Apology calls what the apostles and prophets teach in their writings the *consensus ecclesiae*, the concurring doctrine of the whole Christian Church.⁷¹²⁾ We therefore know what to think of all those who want to place next to Scripture as the source and norm of Christian doctrine the consensus of the Church, be it the consensus of the Church in general, be it the consensus of a few centuries.⁷¹³⁾ All of them, *eo ipso*, renounce the Scripture Principle. This is the case even if they want to call the consensus of the Church only the "secondary principle". In practice, the secondary principle becomes the primary one.

708) Jn. 8:31-32; 15:7: εὖν μείνητε ἐν ἐμοὶ καὶ τὰ ῥήματά μου ἐν νῦν με
ivy.

709) The detailed explanation p. 60 ff.

710) 2 John 9-11; Rom. 16:17.

711) Opp. v. a.VII, 122: *Quid ais, Erasme? Non satis est submisisse sensum Scripturis? Etiam ecclesiae decretis submittis? Quid illa potest discernere, non decretum in Scripturis?* [St. L. XVIII, 1678](#).








712) M. 102, 8; 178, 66; 179, 73 [[Trigl. 145, 83](#) ; [271, 66](#) ; [273, 73](#) ]: *Allegat [Peter, Acts 10:43] consensus omnium prophetarum. Hoc vere est allegare ecclesiae auctoritatem. — Profecto consensus prophetarum iudicandus est universalis ecclesiae consensus esse. — Petrus clare allegat consensus prophetarum, et apostolorum scripta testantur eos idem sentire.* [[Google](#)]

713) William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1645. RE.² VIII, 485 ff. On Calixtus' *Consensus quinquesaecularis* Quenstedt I, 65 sq. [Kahnis](#), Inner Corridor 3 I, 105: "When Calixtus spoke of two principles in the church, Scripture and tradition, this was obviously at the expense of the Protestant principle of Scripture and was again an approximation to the Roman church. (Baier-Walther [I, 87](#).)

The secondary principle, after all, is invented for the purpose of subsequently interpreting or limiting the primary principle, Holy Scriptures. That according to which Scripture is interpreted is placed above Scripture and is used to limit the authority of Scripture. Scripture descends into *norma normata*. This is how it was meant, despite assurances to the contrary, by both Vincentius of Lerinum († 450) and George Calixt († 1656) and others of Helmstedt.⁷¹⁴⁾


As far as the position of Christians and Christian theologians on the testimony of the Church is concerned, two extremes are to be avoided. First, they do not despise the testimony of the church, but take note of it, rejoice in it, and are strengthened in their faith when they recognize that God also in earlier times raised up witnesses to the truth revealed in Scripture.⁷¹⁵⁾ Secondly, they do not overestimate the testimony of the church, as if it could be the foundation of Christian faith apart from and alongside Scripture. Rather, they hold that neither the sayings of individuals nor the sayings of a whole number of individuals (*ecclesia repraesentativa*) can make or establish doctrines of faith.⁷¹⁶⁾ The old Lutheran



714) Quenstedt I, 65 sq. Kahnis' judgment in the previous note is very mild.

715) Thus, also the Augustana repeatedly refers to the fact that it does not teach any news, but only confesses such doctrines, which also had witnesses in the ancient church. M., pp. 43. 47. 48. 69. [[Trigl. pp. 51](#) , [59](#) , [61](#) , [93](#) ] Likewise the Formula of Concord, pp. 688, 64. [[Trigl. 1037, 64](#) ] Cf. pp. 733 ff. [[Trigl. p. 1107 ff.](#) , [p. 1107 ff.](#) ] the Catalogus Testimoniorum. — Chemnitz says in his *Examen Concilii Tridentini*, *Genevae* 1667, p. 71, under the section *De Traditionibus*: *Iniuriam nobis facit Andradius, quod clamat, nos in universum antiquitatis testimonio nihil tribuere, patrum auctoritatem nihili pendere, ecclesiae approbationem, fidem maiestatemque labefactare. Bona enim conscientia affirmare possumus, nos post Sacrae Scripturae lectionem aliquid, quantum quidem Domini gratia concedit, in inquirendo et investigando verae et purioris antiquitatis consensu posuisse et quotidie adhuc ponere. Patrum enim scriptis suum et quidem honorificum, qui illis debetur, tribuimus locum, ut qui multos Scripturae locos praeclare explicaverunt, antiqua ecclesiae dogmata contra novas haereticorum corruptelas defenderunt idque ex Scriptura, multos locos doctrinae recte explicarunt.* [[Google](#)] Chemnitz takes this further in detail.

716) Here belong the well-known words of the Smalcald Articles: *Pontificii allegant Augustinum et quosdam patres, qui de purgatorio scripserint, et non putant nos intelligere, ad quid et quare sic illi locuti sint. Augustinus non scribit esse purgatorium, nec etiam habet testimonium Scripturae, quo nitatur, sed in dubio relinquit, num sit, et inquit matrem*

teachers also point to the fact that a consensus of the church does not exist apart from the doctrines of Scripture, even if one limits oneself to the first five centuries to determine the *consensus*. Quenstedt gives this reason: "Many writings of the ancient teachers of the Church have not been published at all, few of those that have been published have come down to us, most have been lost; also many of the Fathers, especially from the earliest times, have written little or nothing, and what is left of them is mutilated, falsified, and corrupted." And last, and as the main reason, Quenstedt states, "The consensus of a few fathers is not immediately the consensus of the whole church." ⁷¹⁷⁾ With the sentence

suam petiisse, ut sui commemoratio fieret ad altare sive sacramentum. Ad hoc in universum nihil nisi hominum et quidem unius atque alterius devotio fuit, non constituens articulum fidei, id quod solius Dei est. Nostri autem pontifici sententias istas hominum citant, ut fides habeatur tetris, blasphemis et maledictis nundinationibus de missis pro animabus in purgatorio seu de inferiis et oblationibus etc. ... Ex patrum enim verbis et factis non sunt exstruendi articuli fidei, alioquin etiam articulus fidei fieret victus ipsorum, vestimentorum ratio, domus etc., quemadmodum cum reliquiis sanctorum luserunt. Regulam autem aliam habemus, ut videlicet Verbum Dei condat articulos fidei, et praeterea nemo, ne angelus quidem. (M., p. 303. [Trigl. 465, 13 ff. ])

Here belong the clear and concise explanations of the Formula of Concord in both the *Epitome* and the *Solida Declaratio* about the specific difference between Holy Scriptures and all other writings, including the symbols. M., pp. 517, 1, 2, 7. 8; 568, 3. [Trigl. 777, 1, 2, 7. 8 ; 851, 3 ]

717) The whole passage in Quenstedt (1, 66) is instructive and interesting: *Probatur πόρισμα: Ex consensus illius nullitate seu non-existentia. Multa antiquorum ecclesiae doctorum scripta sunt ἀνέκδοτα; pauca eorum, quae edita sunt, ad nos pervenerunt; plurima interciderunt; multi etiam patres, praesertim ex antiquissima antiquitate, parum vel nihil scripserunt, et quae adhuc supersunt patrum scripta, illa mutilata, interpolata et corrupta sunt. Consensus autem paucorum patrum non statim est consensus totius ecclesiae. — Regerunt adversarii: optima tamen scripta patrum a coelesti pronoea esse servata, viliora tamen periisse. Ast quis huius rei fidem faciet? Quis leges praescribet providentiae divinae, aut quis persuadebit, in busto bibliothecae seu Alexandrino, de quo Gellius lib. VI. noct. Att. c. ult., seu Diocletiano, de quo Dr. Damnhauerus in Christeid., p. 231, viliora tantum periisse monumenta, fati dentibus erepta esse cedro digna? Imo b. Lutherus divinae providentiae potius adscribit in der Vorrede ueber den I. Wittenb. Teii, "quod haud exigua scriptorum ecclesiasticorum pars pessum iverit, ne homines impendendum Sacrae Scripturae lectioni ac scrutinio tempus patrum et conciliorum volutioni impendere necesse haberent". — Instant: ex εκδότοις satis aestimari posse ecclesiae antiquae consensum. Resp., posse*

of Vincentius of Lerinum, that it is necessary to maintain quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est.⁷¹⁸⁾ practically nothing can be done. The Romans cut the knot by referring back to the Pope as the authoritative interpreter of the doctrinal tradition as well. Protestant representatives of the principle of tradition, such as Calixt, are forced to rely on the dogma historians, and thus end up in the realm of human authority alongside Scripture.

As for the specifically Roman principle of theology, the Roman theologians name as theological principles the Holy Scriptures, the Tradition, the Councils, the Pope.⁷¹⁹⁾ But because the Pope is granted the final exposition of Scripture, Tradition, the councils' decisions, etc., he is also ultimately the only principle of papist theology.⁷²⁰⁾ The

particulariter et probabiliter aestimari, concedo, nego de fide divina; posse in iis, in quibus συναφισμός apparet, non in aliis, ubi ipsimet in partes eunt; posse aestimari, si in aliquam fidei traditionem uno eodemque consensu aperte, universaliter et perseveranter conspirarint. Sic v. g. de canone Scripturae pulcherrimum habemus concentum doctorum veterum, si colligas omnia testimonia per quinque et plura saecula; ast ille consensus non perinde apparet in dogmatibus. Quanta saepe in patrum scriptis etiam de sensu Scripturae discrepantia? quantus saepe hiatus temporum? quanta locorum vacua, ubi nihil literis proditum? Respiceret ille quinquasaecularis consensus solum controversias coetaneas, non ortas post quinque saecula haereses.

[Google]

718) R. Seeberg, Dogmengesch. 1895, I, 328 f.

719) Thus Bellarmin, De Conciliis II, 12, 1, names four principles: *Verbum Dei scriptum, traditiones ἀγραφους, auctoritatem conciliorum et Romanum pontificem.* (Bei Quenstedt I, 53.) *IOmnis doctrinae ratio, quae fidelibus tradenda sit, Verbo Dei continetur, quod in Scripturam traditionesque distributum est.* Im Tridentinum lautet es sessio IV (Smets, p. 14) so: *Tridentina synodus . . . perspicuens, hanc veritatem et disciplinam contineri in libris scriptis et sine scripto traditionibus, quae, ab ipsius Christi ore ab apostolis acceptae aut ab ipsis apostolis, Spiritu Sancto dictante, quasi per manus traditae, ad nos usque pervenerunt, orthodoxorum patrum exempla secuta, omnes libros tam Veteris quam Novi Testamenti, cum utriusque unus Deus sit auctor, necnon traditiones ipsas, tum ad fidem tum ad mores pertinentes, tamquam vel ore-tenus a Christo vel a Spiritu Sancto dictatas et continua successione in ecclesia catholica conservatas, pari pietatis affectu et reverentia suscipit et veneratur.* [Google]

720) Hülsemann: *Etsi fingant, se resolvere fidem suam in Sacram Scripturam et primam veritatem iuxta sensum universalis ecclesiae*

The infallibility of the pope has been taught in the Roman Church by individuals and whole parties before. However, there were different opinions within the Church as to whether the Pope was infallible in union with the Church (with the councils and teachers of the Church) or alone, for his own person. The latter view, already held earlier by the Jesuits, was elevated by the Vatican Council of 1870 to the status of a statement of faith for the whole Church.⁷²¹⁾ The Roman theology, in so far as it is determined by the "infallibility" of the Pope, has as its principle the satanic exaltation of the one who sits down in the temple of God as a god and acts as if he were God.⁷²²⁾ Instead of sticking to Christ's word according to the divine order, the Roman theology puts above Christ's word the great papal infallibility lie, which is put into the world by Satan's action and finds faith in the world by Satan's action.⁷²³⁾

In order to prove the calling to the testimony of the church as a theological principle alongside the word of Scripture as justified, Roman theologians in particular have referred to passages of Scripture such as Matt. 28:20. Here, the argument goes, Christ promises the church his presence of grace until the Last Day. Therefore, it is no more than fair to assume that the church will not err in the testimony of truth it is charged with. This argument has puzzled some. — What is to be said in reply is clear from the passage itself. Christ promises Matt. 28:20

intellectam, interpretationem tamen universalis ecclesiae resolvunt in interpretationem unius hominis, qui appellatur ab iis Romanus pontifex.[[Google](#)] (*Anti-Bellarminus*, cap. I, thes. 20. Quoted in Quenstedt I, 53.)

721) Pius IX: *Docemuset divinitus revelatum dogma esse definimus: Romanum pontificem, cum ex cathedra loquitur, id est, cum omnium Christianorum pastoris et doctoris munere fungens pro suprema sua apostolica auctoritate doctrinam de fide vel moribus ab universa ecclesia tenendam definit, per assistentiam divinam, ipsi in beato Peter promissam, ea infallibilitate pollere, qua divinus Redemptor ecclesiam suam in definienda doctrina de fide vel moribus instructam esse voluit; ideoque eiusmodi Romani pontificis definitiones ex sese, non autem ex consensu ecclesiae, irreformabiles esse.* (*Constitutio dogmatica prima de ecclesia Christi, edita in sess. 4th Concilii Vaticani: "Pastor aeternus."* [[Google](#)] A. 1870. d. 18. Iulii. Vid. *The canons and resolutions of the Vatican Council. German-Latin edition by G. Schneemann 1871, p. 45 sq.*) (With [Baier-Walther I, 81.](#))

722) 2 Thess. 2:4.

723) 2 Thess. 2:9-12. The more detailed exposition under the section "The Anti-Christ", III, 527-534.

the church his presence of grace after he has given it the commission to teach only his word: "Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you." Christ is with His Church with His revelation of grace and His effect of grace in His Word commanded to the Church. Therefore, insofar as the Church teaches and confesses Christ's doctrine, she cannot, however, err; but insofar as she teaches anything apart from and apart from Christ's doctrine, not only is she not infallible, but she certainly errs.

5. by calling private revelations, also called "immediate" or "new revelations" (*revelationes immediatae, revelationes novae*). By private revelations we mean such revelations about the Christian doctrine as have allegedly come to individuals through visions, apparitions, inner intercession, inner voice, inner light, etc. According to these private or direct revelations, the doctrinal revelation available in the Holy Scriptures is then to be interpreted, corrected and supplemented. The Christian Church has at all times been troubled by people who boasted of private revelations alongside the word of the prophets and apostles. This already happened in the apostolic church. We see from passages like 1 Cor. 14:37 and 2 Thess. 2:2 that in the apostolic congregations there were "prophets" or "spiritual people" who wanted to coordinate their word with the apostle's word and therefore are rebuked very sharply by Paul in the former passage. From the later church, the Montanists, Donatists, Messalians, etc. belong here; from the time of the Reformation, the Anabaptists, Schwenkfeldians, etc., who rejected Luther's insistence on the exclusive validity of Holy Scriptures as a "literal service" and wanted to contrast the "external" word of Scripture with the so-called "internal" word as a higher revelation.⁷²⁴⁾ From the following

 724) Luther describes in the writing "Wider die himmlischen Propheten" (Against the Heavenly Prophets), [St. L. XX, 202 ff.](#), the manner of Carlstadt and his comrades: "What God orders outwardly to the spirit inwardly, as has been said, oh, how scornfully and mockingly he smites it to the wind and wants to enter the spirit beforehand! ... When you ask them, How then do you enter into the same high spirit? they do not point you to the outward gospel, but to the land of milk and honey, and say, Stand in boredom, as I have stood, and you will know it; there the heavenly voice will come and God himself will speak to you. ... Do you see the devil, the enemy of divine order? How he opens your mouth with the words "spirit, spirit, spirit! and yet, at the same time, he outlines both bridges, footbridge and path, ladder and everything, through which the spirit is to come to you, namely the outward

Church. ⁷²⁸⁾ Also the result of modern theology, in so far as it substitutes the principle of experience for Scripture, is the same as in the case of papist and reformed enthusiasm. Luther: "They speak such things only to lead us out of the Scriptures and to raise themselves as masters over us, so that we should believe their dream sermons." ⁷²⁹⁾

728) p. 68 ff.

729) St. L. V, 334 f. Quenstedt (I, 70 sq.) gives a list of enthusiasts down to his time. This list is interesting and instructive because of the inserted remarks. Quenstedt writes: *Antithesis: 1. Fanaticorum variorum, statuentium: "Dei et omnium credendorum dogmatum cognitionem non ex Verbo Dei scripto, sed ex propria unicuique peculiariter facta revelatione et congenita luce, ex raptibus, somniis, angelorum colloquiis, ex verbo interno, ex inspiratione (inscription) Patris coelestis, informatione interna Christi essentialiter cum ipsis uniti, ex magisterio Spiritus Sancti intus loquentis et docentis, sapientiam altiore, quam quae Scripturis sacris continetur, petendam esse."* Tali ενθουσιασμοι correptos fuisse constat permultos fanaticos, antiquos et recentiores; antiquis annumerari possunt Montanistae, Donatistae, Adelphius. [[Google](#)] ... Verba Hist. Tripart. haec sunt: "Ea tempestate Messalianorum, quos ενχρητας, h. e., orantes, appellant, haeresis est luxta. Vocantur autem et alia appellatione ενθουσιασται, i. e., afflati et divini. Hi enim cuiusdam daemonis operationem expectant et hanc Sancti Spiritus praesentiam arbitrantur. Qui vero integro huius rei languore participantur, aversantur operationem manuum velut malam, somnoque semetipsos tradunt et somniorum phantasias prophetias appellant. Huius haereseos fuerunt principes Dadoes et Sabbas et Adelphius, Hermas et Symeones et alii." Recentiores enthusiastae sunt, qui ... ex orco prodierunt ... sub ductu et auspiciis Thomae Munzeri, seditiosi illius Anabaptistarum antesignani in Thuringia, Casparis a Schwenkfeld in Silesia, Theophrasti Paracelsi in Helvetia, Coppini et Quintini in Piccardia, Valentini Weigelii in Misnia. Hi omnes non tantum scriptum Dei Verbum, sed et revelationes, entusiasmos, somnia et immediatam Dei vocem audienda et secundum illa regimen ecclesiae instituendum esse contenderunt. [[Google](#)] ... His adde fratres roseae crucis, novellos prophetas, Jn. Warnerum, Georg. Richardum, Quackeros seu Tremulantes in Anglia, qui etiam raptus divinos et revelationes immediatas somniant. Sic quoque Jean de Labadie publice gloriatus est de revelationibus coelestibus, colloquiis cum beatis sanctis atque beatae virginis Mariae apparitionibus inter orandum sibi factis, ipsiusque asseclae; Deum immediate saepe sine Verbo cum fidelibus agere, asserunt ac proinde, "ad internas Spiritus revelationes confugiendum, seduloque attendendum", monent. Ita et Schurmannia, ενκληρ., p. 80, probare conatur, "praeter Scripturam dari hodieque prophetiam dogmaticam et internas revelationes". 2. papistarum, quos revelationes privatis, v. g., Brigittae, Catharinae Senensi, ... factas inter principia fidei admittere, ostendit Dr. Dannhauerus, Hodom. Spiritus Pap. phantasm. I, p. 61 sq. [[Google](#)]... 3. Socinianorum. Sic Faustus Socinus contra Erasmus Ioh,

The question of what to think of doctrinal revelations outside and beside Scripture is finally decided in Scripture. God has not promised such revelations, but on the contrary has instructed and bound all Christians to the word of the apostles and prophets until the Last Day. With the word of the apostles and prophets, the divine doctrinal revelation is closed. All Christians until the end of time believe through the word of the apostles.⁷³⁰⁾ The Christian church is described as built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.⁷³¹⁾ The old Lutheran theologians rightly remind us again and again of the axiom that applies to all sources of knowledge besides and apart from Scripture: "New revelations concerning Christian doctrine either coincide with the doctrine present in Scripture, and then they are superfluous; or they contain something different from what stands written in the word of the apostles and prophets, and then they are to be rejected."⁷³²⁾


The question has been raised, and continues to be raised, whether divine revelations are not also granted to individuals in our time, which relate to external events in the church and the world. It is not contrary to Scripture to admit the possibility and reality of such revelation.⁷³³⁾
Scripture

p. 166, censet, Laelium Socinum ... interpretationem eorum verborum Christi, loh. 8:52: "Antequam Abraham pater multarum gentium fiat, ego sum lux mundi", precibus multis ab ipso Christo impetrasse, eamque a Deo ipso patefactam esse. Ostorodus, Instit. Germ., c. 1, requirit immediatas revelationes sive internam specialem illuminationem ad intelligendas Scripturas propheticas et maximam partem Apocalypseos Iohannis. Vide Dn. D. Calovium, 11. cc. 4. quorundam Calvinianorum. Sic Andreas Carolstadius revelationes et visiones privatas magnificet, quem libro "contra coelestes prophetas" b. Lutherus refutavit Tom, III, Ienens.; cf. Sleidanum, I. III, p. 61; [Google] I.V, p. 117, ubi inquit: "Is, de quo supra dictum est, Carolstadius, a Luthero dissentiens, Witteberga relictā, clandestinis illis doctoribus, qui visiones et colloquia cum Deo simulabant, ut ante diximus, multo erat familiaris." Et Huld. Zwinglius, qui ex peculiari revelatione sibi innotuisse vult per Spiritum, voculam "est" in verbis coenae positam esse pro "significat". Hinc D. Dannhauerus, Hodom. Spirit. Calv. phantas. I, § 9, p. 59: "Si primordia spectes, entusiasmo fanatico Carolstadiano et Zwingliano non parum debet Calvinismus, quamvis postea videatur defecisse." [Google]

730) Jn. 17:20.

731) Eph. 2:20.

732) Rom. 16:17; 1 Tim. 6:3 ff.; Luke 16:29-31.

733) Cf. 11:27-28; 21:10-11. An example of this kind is given in The Apology (M., 270 f. [Trigl. 419, 1-4 ]) (Johannes Hilten von Eisenach). It is added: "But what to think of this man's address, we leave to each his own judgment."

But the acceptance of new doctrinal revelations contradicts Scripture, because the doctrinal revelations are concluded with the word of the apostles and prophets.⁷³⁴⁾

6. By the demand that the Christian religion be understood historically. This point had already to be touched under the section "Christianity as absolute religion".⁷³⁵⁾ It was then treated in more detail under the section "The closer description of theology conceived as doctrines". It was explained in which sense Christianity could very well be called a historical phenomenon, and in which sense the "historical conception" must be decisively rejected. The latter must happen when the so-called historical conception is used to criticize the Christian doctrine present in Scripture. This happens on the part of newer theologians when they set aside Holy Scriptures as the source and norm of Christian doctrine and want to determine what is unrecognizable as Christian doctrine in the church according to their "historical conception". We already pointed out Richard Grützmacher's correct remark, "that the historical revelation of salvation is contained to us only in the Holy Scriptures which reproduce it." [p. 41] We know of Christ and His doctrine only from Christ's Word, which we possess in the written word of His apostles and prophets, and to which Christ so emphatically points us as the only medium of the knowledge of truth (John 8). Those who abandon this sole source and norm of Christian doctrine and refer us instead to the historical conception of the individual who makes history are asking us to substitute human authority for the divine authority of Holy Scriptures. Modern theologians, who misuse the *terminus* "history" by urging the "historical Christ" against the Christ in his Word, should not close their minds to the realization that in doing so they are offering the Church a product of the human "I".

734) Quenstedt says I, 75 about this point: *Distinguendum inter revelationes, quae articulum fidei spectant vel impugnant, et quae concernunt statum ecclesiae aut politiae, communem vitam et futuros eventus; illas repudiamus, has vero non quidem ulli cum necessitate credendi obtrudendas, nec tamen temere reiiciendas esse nonnulli statuunt. B. Balduinus in Comm, in 1 Tim. 4, P. I, q. I, inquit: "Non dubitamus, Deum adhuc nonnullis interdum revelare futura, quae ad statum ecclesiae et reipublicae pertinent, in usum hominum annuncianda."* [[Google](#)]

735) p. 40 ff.

The real "historical Christ" is the Christ in his word. Luther says in his "Warnungsschrift an die zu Frankfurt am Main":⁷³⁶⁾ "Apart from his word and without his word we know of no Christ, much less of Christ's opinion. For the Christ who pretends to us his opinion without his word, that is the sorrowful devil from hell, who carries Christ's holy name and sells his infernal poison under it." This is a harsh address that our modern ears can hardly bear. But it tells the full truth especially with regard to these newer theologians who separate the "historical Christ" from the Christ in His Word. Also, it may be recalled here once again a concession on the part of the theologians who consistently hold the historical view of Christianity. This is the concession that their historical conception can never lead to certainty, but necessarily leaves the content of the Christian doctrine in doubt.⁷³⁷⁾ With this concession this kind of theology itself declares that it has no right to exist in the Christian church. The Christian church does not teach doubt, but the certain divine truth.⁷³⁸⁾

From the foregoing exposition it is evident that the number of essentially different religious sources of knowledge and norms is reduced to two. Everything that is not merely taken from the Scriptures, in contrast to the Scriptures, originates from the human ego and is adequately designated with the overall name rationalism, regardless of whether it is actually called so or euphemistically paraphrased. He who appeals to natural reason as the source and norm of theology appeals to his natural human ego, because natural reason knows nothing of the Gospel and, when it strays into theology (μετάβαις εις αλλο γένος), necessarily reduces the Christian religion to moral teaching ("morality," "*opinio legis*"), because it knows only something of the divine law. Those who call upon enlightened reason, the reborn "I", etc., likewise call upon natural reason, because enlightened reason—or the new man—has in itself the nature of drawing Christian doctrine merely from Scripture and standardizing it according to Scripture. Those who take the Christian doctrine from the so-called

736) [St. L. XVII, 2015](#). 737) p. 39 f.

738) Jn. 18:37; 17:17; Jn. 8:32. — 2 Tim. 3:7.

from the whole of Scripture and not from the passages of Scripture in which the individual doctrines are revealed, declares in fact that he is merely presenting a product of his own human thoughts to the church and the world. He who appeals to the Church, Tradition, the Pope, etc., as the source and norm of theology apart from and apart from Scripture, likewise appeals to human authorities, because the Christian Church has no doctrine at all outside and beside Scripture. Whoever appeals to private revelations apart from and beside Scripture in matters of Christian doctrine likewise makes his human self the source and norm of Christian doctrine, because Christian doctrine exists in the word of the apostles and prophets as a completely self-contained quantity to which every man is forbidden to add or from which to detract. Likewise, we have realized that even through the so-called historical conception of Christianity, in place of the certain, infallible Word of Christ, the uncertain, fallible human opinion is elevated to the chair of doctrine in the house of God.

In concluding this section, we should refer to the Smalcald Articles, in which Luther says: "In summary, enthusiasm is in Adam and his children from the beginning to the end of the world, poisoned into them by the old dragon, and is of all heresy... origin, strength, and power." ⁷³⁹⁾ Let him who is predominantly free from this enthusiasm in no way ascribe it to himself, but to the divine work of grace alone. As Luther confesses of himself, God gave him the grace to let all thoughts, which occurred to him without the Word of God, fall out again. ⁷⁴⁰⁾

2. The Holy Scriptures, as distinguished from all other writings, are the Word of God. ^

The main error that modern theology finds in the early church, in Luther and the Lutheran dogmatists, is that they "identified" Scripture and the Word of God. We already heard, "The error [of the old dogmatists] ... is in the defective or lack of distinction between the Bible and the Word of God." ⁷⁴¹⁾ Ihmels joins in this judgment, extending the censure at the same time from the first church and the church of

⁷³⁹⁾ M. 322, 9 [[Trigl. 497, 9](#) ]. ⁷⁴⁰⁾ p. 62. ⁷⁴¹⁾ [Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 245.](#)

the Reformation. He says:⁷⁴²⁾ "The old dogmatics tried to ensure the uniqueness of Christianity by letting Christianity rest on a quite unique supernatural revelation. ... In doing so, revelation is understood by it in an essentially intellectualistic sense and factually identified with Scripture. ... In all of this, a heritage from the first times of the church has an effect. ... If the informational Christianity was interested in the pure doctrine, then this interest could seem to be most surely guaranteed by the fact that this doctrine was quite directly covered with the authority of divine revelation. To this was added a second moment, which seemed to spring all the more from the immediate practice of the Reformation need. The church of the Reformation absolutely rejected the authority of Rome, but it had only the authority of Scripture to oppose it. Again, this seemed most assured to the extent that Scripture and revelation could be identified. Meanwhile, however understandable all this may be, viewed historically, the judgment remains that, viewed fundamentally, there is an incongruity between the Reformation understanding of Scripture [according to which Scripture and the Word of God are identified] and revelation." But what is so unanimously blamed as "error" by both liberal and "positive" modern theology on the early church, on Luther, and on the old dogmatists, is the only thing that is correct. It is the doctrines of Scripture about itself. Scripture teaches the identification of Scripture and the Word of God in several ways.

a. The words of Old Testament Scripture are quoted absolutely in the New Testament as the Words of God. Examples: Matt. 1:23 the words are quoted from Is. 7:14 the words are quoted, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son." But of these words it is said in the preceding verse (v. 22) that the Lord had spoken them through the prophet, *ρηθεν υπό κυρίου διά τον προφήτου* Matt. 2:15 are quoted from Hos. 11:1 the words: "Out of Egypt I have called my son." In reference to these words it is immediately testified that the Lord said them through the prophet, *το ρηθεν υπό κυρίου διά τον προφήτου* Acts 4:25 is quoted from Psalm 2:1: "Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing?"

742) [Central Issues 2, p. 56 ff.](#)

But at the same time it is said of these words that God spoke them through the mouth of his servant David, δ διὰ στόματος Δαυίδ παιδός σου εἰπών. In Acts 28:25 the Jews in Rome are held up to the words of Is. 6:9-10: "Go unto this people, and say, With your ears ye shall hear, and not understand; and with your eyes ye shall see, and not know," etc. To these words also is added the judgment that the Holy Spirit must have spoken them (that is, properly, καλῶς) through the prophet Isaiah to the fathers of Israel, το πνεῦμα το ἅγιον ἐλάλησεν διὰ Ἡσαΐον τον προφήτου προς τους πατέρας ημῶν, Heb. 3:7 reads from a quotation from the 95th Psalm, "As the Holy Spirit, τό πνεῦμα το ἅγιον, saith, Today, if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Rom. 3:2, all the Scriptures of the Old Testament, which were entrusted to the Jewish Church, are called τα λόγια τον θεον, God's sayings, God's words. And because the whole Scripture of the Old Testament is God's Word, Christ John 10:35 says of it that it cannot be broken even in a single word. This is the word (*elohim*) אֱלֹהִים [HEBREW], θεοί used by authoritative persons in Ps. 82:6. — In addition, there is a whole series of scriptural passages which are not to be disregarded when it comes to the question whether Scripture and the Word of God are to be identified or not. These are the passages of Scripture in which it is said that all events in the world must be directed or happen according to the word of Scripture. Everything that has happened and will happen, from the beginning to the end of the world, must and will happen as it stands written. Thus it is said Matt. 1:22, as we have already heard, of the birth of Christ from the Virgin Mary, that it happened "that (ὅτι) the Scripture might be fulfilled." Jn. 17:12 the Savior speaks of Judas' apostasy and end, and adds, "that, ὅτι, the Scripture might be fulfilled." When Peter wants to save Christ from capture with the sword in the garden, Christ resists him, Matt. 26:54, with the words, "How would [else] the Scripture be fulfilled? It must therefore come to pass," οὐτως δεῖ γενέσθαι. And of all that happened with Christ, especially of His suffering and subsequent glory, Christ Himself says Luke 24:44 ff.: "All things must be fulfilled (δεῖ) which are written of me in the law of Moses, in the Prophets, and in Psalms," etc. If all that is written in the Scriptures must come to pass,

then the Scriptures must not be the word of men, but the word of Him who has everything in heaven and on earth in His hand, who directs all events, without whom nothing, in heaven and on earth, can come to pass, who is omnipotent and omniscient, in short, the great, majestic God Himself. Olshausen remarks about the quotations from the Old Testament in the New: "The quotations from the Old Testament in the New are not attracted as mere proofs from humanly important writings, but as incontrovertible proofs from divine books. This evidential force could come to them only inasmuch as they were not derived from human sages, but from men driven by the Holy Spirit." ⁷⁴³⁾

b. What has been said so far applies first of all to the Scriptures of the Old Testament. But that the writings of the apostles of the New Testament are of the same nature, namely also God's own Word, is taught in 1 Petr. 1:10-12 taught, where it is first said of the Old Testament prophets that they prophesied of the future grace of the New Testament by the Spirit of Christ which was in them, but then it is added with respect to the New Testament apostles: "Which therefore (at the time of the New Testament) was preached unto you by them which preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit, sent from heaven," ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ ἀποσταλέντι ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ. Here it is clearly taught that, as the word of the prophets of the Old Testament, so also the word of the apostles of the New Testament is the word of the Holy Spirit. The objection that only the oral word is addressed here, not the writings of the apostles, does not apply because the apostles explicitly say that they wrote the same thing that they proclaimed orally. Thus the apostle John:⁷⁴⁴⁾ "What we have seen and heard we declare to you, ... and these things we write to you (καί τὰντα γράφομεν ὑμῖν), that your joy may be complete." Likewise, the apostle Paul exhorts the Thessalonians to make no distinction between what the apostle preached to them orally and what he wrote to them. He says:⁷⁴⁵⁾ "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the

743) *Nachweis der Echtheit sämtlicher Schriften des Neuen Testaments*, 1832, p. 168.

744) 1 John 1:3:4.

745) 2 Thess. 2:15.

traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle," είτε διά λόγου, είτε δι' επιστολῆς ἡμῶν. The apostles were also clearly aware that they were not speaking and writing their own word, but Christ's. We already saw that Paul demands from the "prophets" and "spiritual people" in Corinth submission to his, the apostle's, word on the grounds: "What I write to you are the Lord's commandments," τοῦ κυρίου εἰσὶν ἐντολὰι.⁷⁴⁶⁾ In his second letter to the Corinthians he reminds the whole congregation that Christ speaks through him, δοκιμὴν ζητεῖτε τοῦ ἐν ἐμοὶ λαλοῦντος Χριστοῦ.⁷⁴⁷⁾ And when Paul pronounces the curse upon all teachers who teach a different gospel from that which he himself taught, we have, as has been justly remarked, only the election between two things: either we must suppose that Paul's word is really Christ's word, as he himself says in the Corinthian passages cited, or we would have to suppose that he is speaking in delusion when he puts the curse upon every deviation from the word he preaches. There is no third or middle position. So abundantly is it testified in Scripture itself that, as the Scriptures of the Old Testament, so also the Scriptures of the New Testament are the Word of God. Scripture and the Word of God, then, are truly to be "identified."

The Holy Scriptures are a book of a very unique nature. It is the Word of God, unlike the millions of other books in the world. It forms a class of its own. If we wanted to express the dignity and prestige of the books in a library through the external order, we would have to put the Holy Scriptures on one side and all the other books on the other side. Of course, there are many other books that also contain the Word of God, such as the writings of Luther. But what is contained in other books of God's Word is taken from the Holy Scriptures. It is completely true what Luther says in his Instruction for the Study of Theology that no book teaches (namely, teaches rightly) about eternal life without the Scriptures alone.⁷⁴⁸⁾ Scripture is neither a human nor a "God-man" account of God's Word and the "facts of revelation," but God's Word itself. This is Luther's position on Scripture. To begin with,

746) 1 Cor. 14:37.

747) 2 Cor. 13:3.

748) St. L. XIV, 434.

just two short words from Luther: Luther says, "Thou shalt thus deal with the Scriptures, that thou mayest think as God Himself speaks." ⁷⁴⁹⁾ Further, "The Holy Scriptures did not grow on earth." ⁷⁵⁰⁾ Gerhard can be considered representative of the old Lutheran dogmatists when he writes: "There is no factual difference between the Word of God and Holy Scriptures, *non est reale aliquod discrimen*." ⁷⁵¹⁾ It is only a difference of expression, not of fact, whether we say, "Scripture says" or, "God says." "Holy Scripture and the Word of God are interchangeable terms."

This truth sometimes recedes into the background, because the Holy Scriptures address us in such simple human words and also — especially in the Old Testament — deal with the things of earthly life, with household, agriculture, animal husbandry, clothing and food, etc. The Holy Scriptures are therefore concerned with how Christ fared during his time on earth. Therefore, the Holy Scriptures tell us how Christ was at the time when he walked on earth. Because Christ was invented as a man, the Jewish public considered him to be a mere man like John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah or the prophets. ⁷⁵²⁾ The same thing happens with regard to the Holy Scriptures. Because it is written in human language, it is not considered to be the Word of God, but is put in one class with human books and even criticized by men. This is why Luther warns in his preface to the Old Testament: ⁷⁵³⁾ "I faithfully ask and warn every devout Christian not to be offended by the simple address and history that he will often encounter, but do not doubt how badly [lowly] it can always be regarded as vain words, works, judgments and history of the high divine majesty, power and wisdom. For this is the Scripture which makes fools of all the wise and prudent, and stands open only to the small and foolish, as Christ says Matt. 11:25. Therefore let your arrogance and feeling depart, and think of this Scripture as the very highest, noblest sanctuary, as of the very richest treasure, which may never be sufficiently filled, that you may find the divine wisdom, which God here so foolishly and badly puts forward as to damp all arrogance."

749) St. L. III, 21. 750) St. L. VII, 2095.

751) *L. de Scriptura Sacra*, § 7. 752) Matt. 16:14.

753) St. L. XIV, 3 f.

3. The Holy Scriptures are the Word of God because they are inspired by God. [^]

The Scriptures not only tell us the fact that it is the Word of God, but also teach very clearly whence this comes, namely, that it was breathed or inspired by God into the men through whom it is written: 2 Tim. 3:16: πάσα γραφή θεόπνευστος. 2 Pet. 1:21: υπό πνεύματος ἁγίου φερόμενοι ἐλάλησαν οἱ ἅγιοι θεοῦ ἄνθρωποι. It is in this divine act of inspiration that the Holy Scriptures, though written by men, are the Word of God. In the scriptural statements about inspiration is included the following:

1. Inspiration is not so-called "real inspiration", inspiration of things, nor merely so-called "personal inspiration", inspiration of persons, but verbal inspiration, inspiration of words, because the scripture, of which being inspired is said, does not consist of things or persons, but of written words. As certainly as 2 Tim. 3:16 states the predicate θεόπνευστος from γραφή as the subject, so certainly is verbal inspiration not an "artificial theory" of the old dogmatists, but the simple statement of Holy Scriptures themselves. The same is evident from 2 Petr. 1:21. According to this passage, the holy men of God, under the impulsion of the Holy Spirit (φερόμενοι υπό πνεύματος ἁγίου), did not merely think or address, but spoke (ἐλάλησαν), that is, produced words. That the written words of Holy Scriptures are here spoken of is expressly stated in the preceding verse (v. 20), where the words brought forth by the holy men of God are more particularly addressed as προφητεία γραφής, the prophecy of Scripture. And the apostle Paul, according to 1 Cor. 14, did not merely think of the Lord's commandments or make contemplations in his heart about them, but wrote to the Corinthians, ἃ γράφω ὑμῖν, *scil.* ἀρτοῦ κυρίου ἐντολαί. When Hastings says:⁷⁵⁴⁾ "Inspiration applies to *men*, not to written words," this is asserting just the opposite of what Scripture teaches of inspiration. Correctly, however, Hiley according to Gauss:⁷⁵⁵⁾ "This miraculous

754) Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, by James Hastings, II, 589.

755) Richard W. Hiley, The Inspiration of Scripture, 1885, p. 50.

operation of the Holy Ghost" (namely the divine action of inspiration) "had not the *writers* themselves for its object, — these were only His instruments, and were soon to pass away; — its objects were the *holy books* themselves." Whoever rejects the verbal inspiration and wants to accept only a factual or personal inspiration, thereby denies — out of dogmatic bias — the scriptural doctrine of inspiration. To repeat: Scripture says of Scripture, which admittedly consists of words (*verba*), that it is inspired. Quenstedt:⁷⁵⁶⁾ *Neque enim dicit apostolus, πάντα εν γραφῃ sunt θεόπνευστα, sed πάσα γραφή θεόπνευστος, ut ostendat, non modo res scriptas, sed etiam ipsam scriptionem esse θεόπνευστον. Et quidquid de tota Scriptura dicitur, idem etiam de verbis ceu parte Scripturae non postrema necessario intelligendum est. Si enim vel verbum in Scripturis occurreret non suggestum vel inspiratum divinitus, πάσα γραφή θεόπνευστος dici non posset.* [Google]⁷⁵⁷⁾ We cannot concede that orderly thought underlies the contrast between verbal inspiration and factual or thought inspiration. The thoughts, which are contained in a writing, can only be reached by means of the words used in the scripture. We have the same situation with a writing as with an oral address. In an oral address, we recognize the thoughts of the speaker from the words he uses, insofar as the speaker is able and willing to clothe his thoughts in words. Likewise, we recognize the thoughts of the author of a writing from the words used in his writing, as far as the author is able and willing to express his thoughts in written words. It is the same with regard to God's address and God's writing. Under the condition that God wanted to communicate with men in oral address, men had to pay attention to God's words. Assuming that

756) I, 107.

757) Quite correctly, Meusel states sub "Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures": "More or less, all the variegated recent theories come down to translating the inspiration of Scripture into an illumination of the writers, which is only gradually different from that of any faithful Christian." It had become fashionable for a time to conceive θεόπνευστος, 2 Tim. 3:16, not passively, "breathed by God," but actively, "breathing God." This fashion has again departed. Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 263, note 1: "Today the view of θεόπνευστος as inspired is generally accepted: cf. for instance Winer-Schmiedel, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Sprachidioms* 1894, p. 135. 21."

God wanted to communicate with men in written words, we men must pay attention to the written words. In the case of God's Scripture, we have the great advantage that God is quite able and willing to express His thoughts in completely adequate words. That is why Luther so constantly insists that every Christian and every theologian keep to the words of Scripture. To him, then, every passage of Scripture makes the world too narrow.⁷⁵⁸⁾ Therefore, as we have already heard, he gives the counsel that we cling to the words of Scripture as we cling to a wall or a tree with our hand. But what do we say of Luther! Thus Christ himself has directed us to the words of Scripture. He sets the words of Scripture against the devil three times in temptation and wins the victory. Further, in reference to a single word of Scripture (אֱלֹהִים, [HEBREW] θεοί, Gods) he tells in John 10:35 that Scripture cannot be broken. So Christ also binds us to his own words when he says in John 8: "If ye abide ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῷ ἐμῷ, then ... ye shall know the truth." But Christ's words — we must always remember — we have in the word of his apostles, as he expressly says in the high priestly prayer, John 17, that all Christians will believe in him until the Last Day by their, that is, the apostles', word. And the apostle Paul says 1 Tim. 6:3 of all teachers who do not abide in the saving words of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they are darkened and know nothing, but only cause harmful strife and contention in the church. It is so contrary to Scripture, foolish and harmful to deny verbal inspiration.

2. Inspiration does not consist in a mere divine guidance and preservation from error (*assistentia*, *directio*, or *gubernatio divina*), but in the divine presentation or giving of the words of which the Scriptures are composed. The predicate θεόπνευστος, pronounced by Scripture, instructs us quite unmistakably to the effect that Scripture is not merely directed but inspired by God. Within the Lutheran Church, the Helmstedt theologian Georg Calixt († 1656) wanted, with respect to those things which were already known to the sacred writers beforehand and were of lesser importance in general, a mere

758) St. L. XX, 788.

divine guidance and preservation from error. Rightly was Calixt's doctrine rejected by his Lutheran contemporaries as contrary to Scripture, because "guided or directed by God" and "inspired by God" ([θεόπνευστος](#)) were quite different terms. And it is practically very important that we should not have substituted for the θεόπνευστος [God-breathed] a mere direction and preservation from error. With this substitution, Scripture would be at best errorless human word, but not the living, majestic word of God, glowing with God's power. God's own Word is Scripture only by inspiration, by being "inspired by God." Quenstedt writes against Calixt and some Romans (Bellarmin): ⁷⁵⁹⁾ *Distinguendum inter assistentiam et directionem divinam nudam, qua tantum cavetur, ne scriptores sacri in loquendo et scribendo a vero aberrant, et inter assistentiam et directionem divinam, quae includit Spiritus Sancti inspirationem et dictamen. Non illa, sed haec Scripturam efficit θεόπνευστον.* [[Google](#)]

3. Inspiration does not extend only to a part of the Scriptures, for example, only to the main things, the doctrines of faith, and to what was previously unknown to the writers, etc., but to the whole Scriptures. What is a part of Scripture is also inspired by God. This and nothing else comes to expression in the words πάσα γραφή θεόπνευστος. We would do violence to these words of Scripture if we were to include parts of Scripture, such as those parts which present interwoven historical, geographical, physical, etc. We would do violence to these scriptural words if we wanted to exclude parts of the scripture from the inspiration, for example the parts which present interwoven historical, geographical, physical etc. data, or also such parts which report things already known before to the writers. It is by no means a meaningful objection to the inspiration of Scripture when recent theologians remark that Scripture is not a textbook of history or geography or natural science, and therefore it is self-evident that inspiration does not refer to historical, geographical, and natural scientific data.⁷⁶⁰⁾ Certainly, the proper scopus of Scripture is not to teach these things. The actual scopus of Scripture is given in passages such as John 5:39; 2 Timothy 3:15 ff; 1 John 1:4, etc. We men are to be led by the Scriptures to the knowledge of Christ and thus to salvation. But if by the way, because God has entered into the history of mankind with His Word, in this His Word also

759) I, 98 sq. 760) So also Ihmels, [Zentralfragen](#), p. 72.

historical etc. remarks occur, so these are also inspired and infallible, because they are parts of the scripture. More about this later. Quenstedt does not go beyond 2 Tim. 3:16 when he says:⁷⁶¹ *Eatione θεοπνοῆς nullum discrimen agnoscimus [inter res Scripturae Sacrae] et divinitatem Scripturae toti uniformiter inesse asserimus. . . . Ees Scripturae sunt in triplici differentia: 1. Quaedam fuerunt sacris scriptoribus naturaliter prorsus incognitae vel propter suam excellentiam, ut fidei mysteria, vel propter nonexistentiam, ut futura contingentia, vel propter absentiam a sensibus, ut cordis secreta. 2. Quaedam naturaliter quidem cognoscibiles fuerunt, sed scriptoribus sacris actu incognitae ob vetustatem et remotionem temporum aut locorum, nisi aliunde forte illis innotuerint sive per famam, sive per traditionem, sive per scripturam aliquam humanam, ut historia diluvii.... 3. Quaedam non tantum cognoscibiles, sed et naturaliter actu ipso cognitae fuerunt publicis Dei notariis per propriam experientiam (historische Forschung des Lukas, Kap. 1, 1 ff.] et sensuum ministerio, ut exitus Israelitarum ex Aegypto et iter in deserto Mosi, historia iudicum Samueli, vita et facta Christi evangelistis et apostolis. Verum non tantum res primi, sed etiam secundi et tertii ordinis in ipso actu scribendi a Spiritu Sancto immediate sunt dictatae et inspiratae sacris amanuensibus, ut his et non aliis circumstantiis, hoc et non alio modo ac ordine, quo scriptae sunt, consignarentur. [[Google](#)]*

Since, according to the statement of the Scriptures about themselves, the inspiration does not only extend to a part of the Scriptures, but to the whole Scriptures, and the Scriptures do not consist of persons or things, but of words, it is at the same time stated that the Scriptures are completely free of error in all their words and in each of their words. To this, indeed, is the testimony that Christ gives to the Scriptures in John 10:35, when he remarks in reference to the use of a single word (Ps. 82:6: מִן־הֵימָנִים , [**HEBREW**] θεοί): οὐ δύναται λυθῆναι ἢ γραφῇ. Stöckhardt says very correctly:⁷⁶² "Where Christ and the apostles refer to the Scriptures, they do not merely introduce general Scriptural ideas, nor do they merely refer to individual passages, but often take their finger to a single word of Scripture and draw from it the proof of their case. In Gal. 3:16 St. Paul writes:

761) 1:98.

762) [L. u. W. 32, 255](#) f., in the detailed article: "What Does Scripture Say of Itself?"

Now the promise is ever made to Abraham and his seed. He does not say, "through the seed," as through many, but as through one, "through your seed," which is Christ.' On the one word: 'through thy seed,' בְּזֶרְעֶךָ, [HEBREW] Gen. 22:18, on the singular of this noun, he takes all weight, and proves from it that Christ was already promised to Abraham, and observes that He, that God thus spoke, that God purposely chose this expression. Matt. 22:43-44 Christ testifies and proves His deity to the Pharisees from the 110th Psalm, namely from the one word My Lord'. Jn. 10:35 all emphasis lies on the expression θεοί, ἱεῖς, [HEBREW], 'gods', that title which the 82nd Psalm attaches to the authorities. If this name already belongs to the authorities, how much more to the one whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world! Christ and the apostles regarded every sentence, every word they found and read in the Scriptures as the Word of God in the true sense of the word. ... The now so much maligned verbal inspiration, this 'little bundle of dogmatists'⁽⁷⁶³⁾ has solid ground in the Scriptures. ... Every word of Scripture is an inviolable sanctuary, an infallible, unchangeable word of God. Scripture expressly confirms this. ... In the Scriptures we encounter the serious warning not to do or add anything to what God has commanded and spoken, Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Prov. 30:5-6; Revelation 22:18-19. Also every addition is sacrilege, because then God's Word is mixed with man's word. To that warning is added the threat: 'Do nothing to his words, lest he rebuke you!' ... Christ raises his voice and says: "I have not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For I say unto you: Truly, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or tittle of the law will pass away, until it is all fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall destroy one of the least of these commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.' Matt. 5:17-19; Luke 16:17. We are warned and confess with Paul: 'I believe everything that stands written in the law and the

763) It is also possible for Luthardt ([Comp.](#)¹⁰p. 332) to say that the verbal inspiration is not taken from Scripture, but "purely conceptually constructed". Theodor Kaftan (Moderne Theol. d. alten Glaubens 2, p. 109) addresses a "theologumenon" of verbal inspiration.

in the prophets', Acts 24:14." So also Luther confesses:⁷⁶⁴⁾ "Scripture has never erred," and judges: "*Unus apex doctrinae pins valet quam coelum et terra. Ideo in minimo non patimur eam laedi.*"⁷⁶⁵⁾ That Luther is thinking here of every tittle of doctrine, insofar as the doctrine is expressed in the certain inviolable words of Scripture, is evident from the context. It is a question of the words of the Lord's Supper to the sacramentarians, and Luther adds, "If they believed that the Word of God was, they would not thus play with the same, but hold it in the highest honor, and ascribe faith to it without all disputation and doubt, and would know that in one Word of God all and all the words of God were one." Quenstedt has used words in regard to the infallibility of Scripture that are heard only with terror in the modern-theological camp. And yet Quenstedt does not go beyond what Scripture says of itself. He writes:⁷⁶⁶⁾ *Sacra Scriptura canonica originalis est infallibilis veritatis omnisque erroris experts, sive, quod idem est, in Sacra Scriptura canonica nullum est mendacium, nulla falsitas, nullus vel minimus error, sive in rebus, sive in verbis, sed omnia et singula sunt verissima, quaecunque in illa traduntur, sive dogmatica illa sunt, sive moralia, sive historica, chronologica, topographica, onomastica; nullaque ignorantia, incogitantia aut oblivio, nullus memoriae lapsus Spiritus Sancti amanuensibus in consignandis sacris literis tribui potest aut debet.* [[Google](#)] Likewise Calov says:⁷⁶⁷⁾ *Nullus error, vel in leviculis, nullus memoriae lapsus, nedum mendacium ullum locum habere potest in universa Scriptura Sacra.* ["No error, even in the slightest, no lapse of memory, let alone a lie, can have any place in the whole Holy Scripture."] These words of Quenstedt and Calov, which, as said, do not go beyond the self-testimony of the Scriptures, respectively beyond the testimony of Christ and the apostles, have sounded so strange even to a man like Philippi that he thought he had to express his dissent. Philippi writes in the first edition of his *Dogmatics*,⁷⁶⁸⁾ although he wants to stand up for the "word inspiration": "In doing so, one does not have to resist from the outset the recognition of the possibility that some subordinate differences really exist and therefore remain unresolved. For there is here, however, an area of insignificant coincidence, as the similarity of a portrait

764) [St. L. XV, 1481](#). 765) *Ad Gal.* Erl. II, 341; [St. L. IX, 650](#).

766) *Systema* I, 112. 767) *Systema* I, 561.

768) [Kirchl. Glaubenslehre 1 I, 208](#) f.

is not conditioned by the exactly corresponding length of the nails and hair. How far the inspiration has completely overcome the human weakness also here, seems to us to be able to be determined only on historical way, not dogmatically [is meant: not *a priori*, on the basis of what the Scripture says about itself, but *a posteriori*, on the basis of human investigation]. We would therefore at least not like to say *a priori* with Calov: *Nullus error, vel in leviculis, nullus memoriae lapsus, ... ullum locum habere potest in universa Scriptura Sacra*. Similarly Julius Africanus already expressed in relation to historical-chronological difficulties in the New Testament: τὸ μέντοι εὐαγγέλιον πάντως ἀληθεύει." That Philippi was not comfortable with this position on the infallibility of Scripture is evident from several statements. After declaring his dissent with Calov, he adds: "But experience, on the other hand, has shown how often it has proved rash to say, in a concrete case, that this or that difference is to be regarded as badly insoluble." Further, he voices⁷⁶⁹⁾ a complaint "that the corrosive poison of Christian [Philippi means: of un-Christian] subjectivism has so corroded the spiritual marrow and bone of faith that it seems to us [Philippi includes himself] a small thing to break the objective, infallible, and imperishable word of the Lord soon in this, soon in that point." In particular, Philippi also pronounces the very correct canon: "The truth and certainty of the revelation [of Scripture] is in no way dependent on the success of such attempts [namely: "to harmonize the Bible and natural science"]. For the grass withers, and the flower of the field fades, and with it the science of grass and flowers; but the Word of our God abideth forever. The theology believing in revelation should rejoice much less over the agreement of natural scientific hypotheses, should grieve much less over their contradiction, than it so often happens. The really certain results do not contradict, and the hypotheses are just hypotheses." Not least of all, Philippi's inner embarrassment also arises from the fact that he was prompted to make a senseless distinction that has provoked willful ridicule even among modern theologians. Philippi wanted to distinguish between "word inspiration" and

769) op. cit., p. 197.

"verbal inspiration," accepting the former and rejecting the latter.⁷⁷⁰⁾ But no reasonable man has ever taught a "word-inspiration" of the Scriptures, least of all the Lutheran dogmatists. Very correctly Dr. Ebeling remarks: "The Bible does not contain words like a dictionary, but words in a certain context and sense."⁷⁷¹⁾ [Philippi](#), then, in an addendum to the third edition of his *Dogmatik*, expressly recanted his earlier assumption that an error in Scripture was possible in secondary matters, in the following words: "I now admit myself that, according to my own theory of inspiration, even the possibility of errors in Scripture in secondary matters and insignificant coincidences is to be negated *a priori*."⁷⁷²⁾ In the modern-theological camp, Philippi's earlier position has been noted with pleasure. Thus Grimm wrote:⁷⁷³⁾ *Philippus, si recte eum intelligimus, genus et formam dictionis, non autem singula vocabula Spiritui Sancto deberi docet* [word inspiration, not word inspiration] *nec nisi levissimi momenti diversitates in rerum narrationibus concedit*. ["Philippi, if we understand him aright, teaches that the kind and form of speech, but not the individual terms, are due to the Holy Spirit [word inspiration, not verbal inspiration], nor does he permit differences of any but the slightest importance in the narratives of things."] We do not find that one has been just as eager to report Philippi's recantation, even after it had become known. In 1912, Nitzsch-Stephan still addresses Philippi as if he had not changed his original position at all.⁷⁷⁴⁾

5. The inspiration of the Scriptures naturally also includes the impulse and command to write (*impulsum et mandatum scribendi*). If Roman theologians on the one hand want to admit that the evangelists and apostles wrote according to God's will and by God's inspiration (*Deo volente et inspirante*), but on the other hand claim that a command (*mandatum*) to write cannot be proven, this is a contradiction in itself.⁷⁷⁵⁾ [Quenstedt](#) rightly says: "They

770) *Glaubenslehre*, [p. 184, 191](#).

771) The Bible God's Word and Faith's Only Source 2, p. 18.

772) *Glaubenslehre* [3 I](#), 279.

773) *Institutio Theologiae Dogmaticae Evangelicae Historico-critica* 2, p. 122.

774) *Ev. Dogmatik* 3 1912, [p. 253](#).

775) Thus says [Bellarmine](#): *Falsum est, Deum mandasse apostolis, ut scriberent. Legimus enim Matt. ult. mandatum, ut praedicarent evangelium; ut autem scriberent, nusquam legimus. Itaque Deus nec mandavit*

[the Roman theologians] engage in antics" (*nugantur*). If God willed that the evangelists and apostles should write, and at the same time inspired them (*inspiravit*) what they wrote, then in the act of inspiration they also had the impulse and command to write. The Lutheran theologians therefore say: *Ipsa inspiratio, quae suggeruntur, quae in literas referri debeant, importat influxum ad exercitium actus scriptionis*. ["The inspiration itself, which is suggested to be reflected in letters, implies an influence on the exercise of the act of writing."] ⁷⁷⁶⁾ Quenstedt: *Inspiratio scribendorum et impulsus internus ad scribendum aequipollent. Implicatur contradictio in adiuncto, apostolos scripsisse Deo volente et inspirante et suggerente et tamen non praecipiente*. ["The inspiration to write and the internal impulse to write are equivalent. A contradiction is implied in the addition, that the apostles wrote to God willing and inspiring and suggesting and yet not commanding."] ⁷⁷⁷⁾ — If we ask why the Roman theologians burden themselves with this self-contradiction, the reason is obvious. They bring the *sacrificium intellectus* in the interest of the pope's decisive authority, *ad summam papae potestatem stabiliendam*. By claiming that the Gospels and the Apostolic Epistles are inspired, that is, the Word of God, but yet not written by explicit divine command, the value and necessity of Holy Scriptures is to be depressed and, on the other hand, the value and necessity of the "unwritten Word of God," administered, controlled, and made by the Pope under the name of "Tradition" is to be exalted (Luther: the Pope's "Gauckelsack"). According to Roman doctrine, the written Word, the Holy Scriptures, is not a complete rule of faith and life, but requires supplementation by Tradition, which is to be accepted and venerated *pari pietatis affectu et reverentia*.⁷⁷⁸⁾ But the *pari pietatis affectu et reverentia* naturally turns into *dispari pietatis affectu et reverentia*, and tradition is to be placed above Scripture when the evangelists and apostles wrote without divine command. Then the matter stands thus: Holy Scriptures are not actually a divine institution, because for them the *mandatum scribendi* is lacking. On the other hand, the Holy Father Pope, as the visible head of the Church appointed by Christ, is an eminently divine institution, and so the Pope, or rather the tradition controlled by him, is entitled to the supreme power in the Church. From this view

expresse, ut scriberent, nec ut non scriberent. Nec tamen negamus, quin Deo volente et inspirante apostoli scripserint, quae scripserunt. [[Google](#)] (Quoted in Quenstedt I, 94 from Bellarmin, De V. D., I. 4, e. 3.)

⁷⁷⁶⁾ [Baier-Walther I, 99.](#)

⁷⁷⁷⁾ *Systema* I, 96.

⁷⁷⁸⁾ Trident. Sess. IV, *de canon. Script. Cat. Rom., praef.* 12.

flow such *dicta* of Roman theologians in which they claim that Christian doctrine is preserved more purely by Tradition than by Holy Scriptures; the Church can very well exist without Holy Scriptures, but not without Tradition; Christ did not want to make His Church dependent on paper Scriptures and dead parchment, with the enhancement: Scriptures are not at all a reliable guide because of the human weaknesses attached to them, and the Church would have been better served if there had been no Holy Scriptures at all.⁷⁷⁹⁾ From here the interest becomes clear, why Roman theologians deny the *mandatum scribendi* and address that the evangelists wrote only "by chance", "by accident", etc.. They are concerned that the I of the Pope be recognized as the decisive authority in the Church. — From here, an analogy between modern theology and the theological principle of Rome is also clearly recognized. Although modern theologians deny the inspiration of Scripture, they are willing to admit that the Word of God is still found in Scripture. Even far-left theologians still speak of the apostles as "standing closer" to divine revelation in their writings than later generations. But what they vigorously protest against, just like Rome, is this, that the divine revelation is to be limited to the "book of revelation" in the Holy Scriptures, to a "paper pope", to a "code of doctrines fallen from heaven". Modern theology also has the same interest as Rome. It wants to get away

779) The documentary evidence in Quenstedt I, 90: 1. Antithesis: 1. *Μισογράφων pontificiorum asserentium, Scripturam Sacram non esse necessariam et posse ecclesiam Scriptura illa carere; ita Gregorius de Valentia in Anal. Fid., p. 388, ubi ait, "doctrinam coelestem purius conservari posse per traditionem quam per Scripturam". Bellarminus, I. IV, De V. Dei, c. 4, contendit, "ecclesiam sine Scriptura consistere posse, sine traditione non posse". Costerus asserit, "Christ nec ecclesiam suam a chartaceis Scripturis pendere nec membranis mysteria sua committere voluisse". Petrus a Soto: "Illud statuatur ut certissimum, quod hoc scribendi verba divina atque revelationes consilium ob imperfectionem et infirmitatem humanam est excogitatum a Deo, atque infirmioribus et imperfectioribus magis expediens; sanctoribus vero et purioribus aut minus aut nullo modo necessarium." Huc spectat vox impia illa cardinalis cuiusdam, relata Tileno, P. 1, disp. 2, th. 35: "Melius consultum fuisse ecclesiae, si nulla unquam ex-titisset Scriptura." [[Google](#)] (L. c., q. 1, f. 90.)*

from Scripture as the only source and norm of theology and, in place of Scripture, indeed not the Pope's ego, but rather the "experience" or — what is the same thing — "the pious self-consciousness", the ego of the theologizing subject, make it the deciding factor in the Christian church instead of Scripture. When Theodor Kaftan says:⁷⁸⁰⁾ "The modern theology that I represent does not bend under any only external authority," he understands by the external authority, under which he does not want to bend, the Holy Scriptures, the written word of the apostles and prophets. And when he adds that he bows to "God's Word" "as to an authority which has asserted itself and which holds itself, in its own strength," the opinion is that he wants to allow only so much to be valid from Scripture as has shown itself to be truth before the judgment seat of his "experience" or his "pious self-consciousness." Ihmels means the same,⁷⁸¹⁾ when he calls it a "fatal mistake" that the first church, the church of the Reformation, and the old dogmatists retreated only to Scripture as the source and norm of Christian doctrine, and when, on the other hand, he sees in Schleiermacher's theology and especially in Erlangen's theology a "tremendous progress" in the right trend, because through this theology the experience or the Christian I has come to the fore. Result: Rome is concerned with the I of the pope, modern theology is concerned with the I of the theologizing individual.

The whole debate is closed by the fact that, according to the testimony of Scripture, the Christian Church is not even in the least part built on the pious ego, be it of the Pope, be it of other theologizing individuals, but only on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, that is, on the Word of Scripture, until the Last Day. We already saw abundantly that Christ refers His Church and all the world to the Word of His Apostles, that the Apostles refer to all pseudo sources of knowledge and pseudo norms precisely to their written Word, that the Apostles were conscious of teaching Christ's Word in full, and therefore call upon Christians to deny church fellowship to all those

780) *Modern Theology of the Old Faith*², p. 112 f.

781) [Central Issues 2, p. 56 ff.](#)

who deviate from their, the apostles', doctrines. We have already seen that the apostles claim not only temporary and local, but permanent validity for what they wrote, even if it was done "by accident" (1 Cor. 1:11).⁷⁸²⁾ This is also the point Luther makes to his Roman opponent, who wanted to grant only temporary and local validity to the Lord's Supper *sub utraque specie*. He expresses on this occasion in the most decisive way that Paul's letters bind all Christians at all times and in all places. He writes:⁷⁸³⁾ *Quid magis ridiculum et fraterno isto capite* ⁷⁸⁴⁾ *dignius dici potuit, quam apostolum particulari ecclesiae, scil. Corinthiorum, ista scripsisse et permisisse* (namely the Lord's Supper under both forms), *non autem universali? Unde haec probat? Ex solito penu, nempe proprio et impio capite. ... Si demus unam epistolam aliquam Pauli aut unum alicuius locum non ad universalem ecclesiam pertinere, iam evacuata est tota Pauli auctoritas. Corinthii enim dicent, ea, quae de fide ad Romanos docet, non ad se pertinere. Quid blasphemius et insanius hac insania fingi possit? Absit, absit, ut ullus apex in toto Paulo sit, quem non debeat imitari et servare tota universalis ecclesia. Non sic senserunt Patres usque in haec tempora periculosa, in quibus praedixit Paulus futuros esse blasphemos et caecos et insensatos, quorum unus hic frater vel primus est.* [[Google](#)]⁷⁸⁵⁾

782) S. 148.

783) *De Captivitate Babylonica. Opp. v. a. V, 26 sq.; St. L. XIX, 19 f.*

784) The Italian monk of Cremona, whose name is unknown, is meant, who had written a book in which he wanted to lead Luther back to the Roman church. Cf. Luther's description of this monk, loc. cit. p. 21.

785) Luther's *absit, absit*, etc. does not contradict 1 Cor. 7:26, where Paul does not give a commandment at all (v. 25), but only gives the counsel that virgins remain unmarried "for the sake of the present need". Against the sophistry of papist theologians, that the apostles wrote from "accidental cause" (*ex occasione accidentaria, fortuito*), thus not in divine order and therefore not binding for all Christians, Quenstedt says: *Scripserunt quandoque apostoli ex occasione, sed non fortuita, sed a Deo subministrata. Deus omnia ita direxit, ut completum perfectumque canonem fidei et vitae haberemus, Scripturas scil. propheticas et apostolicas.* ["Sometimes the apostles wrote from an opportunity, but not accidental, but provided by God. God directed everything in such a way that we should have a complete and perfect canon of faith and life, namely the Scriptures, prophetic and apostolic."] Quenstedt quotes from Tertullian *Contra Marcionem*, 1. 5: *Ad omnes apostoli scripserunt, dum ad quosdam.* ["The apostles wrote to all, while to some"] and from (Cyrill, *Proleg. in Ioh.*: *Hac re commotus Iohannes par esse putavit, tam praesentibus quam futuris huius evangelii conscriptione consulere.* ["Moved by this matter, John thought it appropriate to consult both the present and the future about the writing of this gospel."])

4. The relationship of the Holy Spirit to the writers of the Holy Scriptures. [^]

The newer theologians want to leave this relationship undefined. They address this point as a "difficult problem" for whose solution the appropriate formula has not yet been found. Luthardt, for example, remarks: "On the whole, faithful theology to find a formula in which it can express the 'God-human' character of Scripture. Philippi, too, speaks of 'organic unification of the spirit of God and the spirit of man' in inspiration, asserts 'word'-but not 'verbal-inspiration,' and admits 'the possibility of subordinate differences.'" ⁷⁸⁶⁾ Further, when Gray says:⁷⁸⁷⁾ "The boundaries of the divine and human in Scripture cannot be determined mechanically and quantitatively at all," he means that it cannot be determined what in Scripture is attributable to the Holy Spirit and what in it is attributable to the human spirit of its human writers. If the matter really stood like this, Horst Stephan would be right when he once again gives the theological world the counsel:⁷⁸⁸⁾ "We would do better, in spite of all modern attempts at a good Evangelical interpretation, to abandon the concept of inspiration altogether." A Bible in which the boundaries between divine truth and human error remain uncertain would be a suitable object of dispute for theologians of Lessing's school of thought, but not the book of which David says, "The testimony of the Lord is sure, and makes the foolish wise," and, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." ⁷⁸⁹⁾ But all talk to this effect, as if the relationship between the Word of God and the word of man in Scripture was indeterminable,

 786) Compendium 10, 1900, p. 338. By the way: In 1900, Luthardt, too, does not take any notice of the fact that Philippi has revoked "the possibility of subordinate differences", which revocation is published in the third edition of Philippi's Glaubenslehre, 1, 279, already published in 1883.

787) The detailed quotation in Baier-Walther 1, 102, from Grau's Entwicklungsgeschichte des neutestamentlichen Schrifttums 1, 11, 12, 18.

788) Glaubenslehre 1921, p. 52. The counsel is by no means new. Already Bretschneider wrote in his *Dogmatik* 4 I, 394: "in general, all inspiration of the New Testament, and especially of the words, appears to be something useless because it would presuppose a mechanism of instruction that is quite inapplicable to human souls."

789) Ps. 19:8; 119:105.

is completely lacking in factual justification. They are to be described as an attempt to make clear water turbid. The Scriptures are very precise about the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the human writers of the Scriptures, when they say, for example that "the Lord" or "the Holy Spirit" "by the prophet," διὰ τον προφήτου "by the mouth of David," διὰ στόματος Δαβίδ, "by the mouth of his holy prophets," διὰ στόματος των αγίων ... προφητών,⁷⁹⁰⁾ had spoken, and with the result that this word spoken through men is not their, men's, but wholly God's or the Holy Spirit's word, λόγια τον θεον, Rom. 3:2. As Paul expressly calls the Word written by him God's Word in distinction from man's word: "What I write to you are τον κυρίου εντολαί," ["the Lord's command"] just as Paul also says of his verbally proclaimed Word: ἐδέξασθε ου λόγον ανθρώπων, αλλά, καθώς ἐστιν ἀληθώς, λόγον θεοῦ. ["When ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the Word of God"]⁷⁹¹⁾

We must say, then, with regard to the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the writers of Scripture: God used the sacred writers as His organs or instruments to communicate His Word to men in writing. To express this relationship between the Holy Spirit and the human writers, both the Church Fathers and the ancient Lutheran theologians call the holy writers *amanuenses*, *notarii*, *manus*, *calami*, scribes, notaries, hands, pens of the Holy Spirit. As is well known, these expressions are quite generally derided by more recent theologians. But Philippi rightly calls this mockery an "incomprehensible mockery,"⁷⁹²⁾ The expressions are perfectly scriptural as long as we hold the point of comparison (*tertium comparationis*), the mere instrumentality. The expressions say no more and no less than the fact that the sacred writers wrote not their own Word, but God's Word, λόγια τον θεον, and this, as we saw, is the authoritative judgment of Christ and His apostles. These expressions, therefore, should not be ridiculed, but accepted as scriptural.

That in this mere instrumentality relationship the writers are not dead machines, but living personal tools endowed with intellect and will

790) Matt. 1:22; 2:15; Acts 1:16; 4:25; Luke 1:70.

791) 1 Thess. 2:13. 792) [Doctrine of Faith 1, 177.](#)

and equipped with a certain style (*modus dicendi*), lies first of all in the nature of the thing. For God did not first kill or "dehumanize" Isaiah, David, and the holy prophets all, in order that through them (διὰ) His Word might either be spoken or written, but carefully preserved both alive and in their genuinely human mode of expression, so that they might speak and write and thus be understood by men. And just this, and only this, has also been very emphatically taught and expounded both by the Fathers of the Church and by the ancient dogmatists, when they spoke of *amanuenses*, *calami*, and so on. It is to be noted that the Church Fathers and the old dogmaticians had two things in mind when they used these phrases.

First, because God gave His Word to men through the apostles and prophets, or — what is the same thing — because the apostles and prophets did not write their own word, but God's Word, so church fathers and dogmatists call the apostles and prophets God's hands, writers, notaries, and so on. Augustine, *De Consensu Evangelistarum* I, 35: *Cum illi (the apostles) scripserint, quae ille [Christus] ostendit et dixit, nequaquam dicendum est, quod ipse [Christus] non scripserit, quandoquidem membra eius id operata sunt, quod dictante capite cognoverunt. Quidquid enim ille de suis factis et dictis nos legere voluit, hoc scribendum illis tanquam suis manibus imperavit.* Cyprian, *Serm. de Eleem.: Spiritus Sanctus erat scribe, prophetae erant eius calami, quibus Spiritus Sanctus scribenda dictabat.*⁷⁹³⁾ Likewise the ancient dogmatists. Gerhard:⁷⁹⁴⁾ *Merito (prophetas in Vetere et evangelistas et apostolos in Novo Testamento) amanuenses, Christi manus et Spiritus Sancti tabelliones sive notarios vocamus, cum nec locuti fuerint nec scripserint humana sive propria voluntate, sed φερόμενοι ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος ἁγίου, acti, ducti, impulsivi, inspirati, gubernati a Spiritu Sancto. Scripserunt non ut homines, sed ut Dei homines, hoc est, ut Dei servi et peculiariora Spiritus Sancti organa. Quando igitur liber aliquis canonicus vocatur liber Moysis, psalterium Davidis, epistola Pauli etc., illud fit dumtaxat ratione ministerii (because of the instrumentality relationship), non ratione causae principalis.* [Google] Quenstedt says of the prophets of the Old Testament and the evangelists and apostles of the New Testament:⁷⁹⁵⁾ Uti os

793) Bei Quenstedt I, 80.

794) *Loci, L. de Script. S.*, § 18.

795) *Systema* I, 80.

Dei fuerunt in loquendo seu praedicando prophetae et apostoli, ita quoque manus fuerunt et calami Spiritus Sancti in scribendo. Spiritus Sanctus enim per eos, ut dixit, ita scripsit. Neque enim alius vocis ore prolatae, alius scriptae fons est. Unde etiam amanuenses, Christi manus, et Spiritus Sancti tabelliones sive notarii et actuarii dicuntur.

On the other hand, both church fathers and dogmatists firmly reject any mechanical or external conception of the $\delta\acute{\iota}\alpha$ or the scribe relationship. As far as the church fathers are concerned, they — in sharp contrast to Montanism — explicitly reject ecstasy as a form of inspiration. Cremer also admits this when he writes:⁷⁹⁶⁾ "Miltiades, also an apologist, wrote according to Eusebius' *Hist. Eccl.* 5, 17 against the Montanists $\pi\epsilon\pi\iota\ \tau\omicron\nu\ \mu\eta\ \delta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\ \pi\rho\omicron\phi\acute{\eta}\tau\eta\nu\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \acute{\epsilon}\kappa\sigma\acute{\alpha}\tau\alpha\sigma\epsilon\iota\ \lambda\alpha\lambda\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$, ["it dare not be maintained that a prophet speaks in ecstasy"] Clement Alexandrinus calls ecstasy a characteristic of false prophets and the evil spirit (*Strom.* 1, 311), and since Origen the rejection of ideas originating in paganism has characterized the view of the Doctors of the Church. In the most complete opposition to Montanism, one did not want to recognize anything unconscious in the prophets." For this Cremer further refers to Chrysostom, Epiphanius, Athanasius, etc. And as for the ancient dogmatists, they are careful to reject the false notion as if the prophets and apostles had done only mechanical work in writing the Holy Scriptures. Rather, they take it that the *amanuenses* performed their writing willingly and with the full awareness and understanding that they were writing God's Word. Quenstedt, in his explanation of the $\phi\epsilon\rho\acute{o}\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\iota$ (2 Petr. 1:21), declares⁷⁹⁷⁾ very clearly in what way the will and understanding of the sacred writers were involved in the writing of Scripture. The *amanuenses* were involved not only according to their natural will (*naturali sua voluntate*), according to which man is moved by God in the field of natural life, nor only according to their born-again will, according to which all Christians are driven to pious works by God, but according to the extraordinary movement by which they were driven by the Holy Spirit in their special calling and ministry, namely as prophets and apostles,

796) RE. ² VI, 752.

797) *Systema* I, 82 sq.

to set down God's own Word of God in writing (*in literas redigere*). But in the same context Quenstedt also takes note of the respect in which the human will of the writers was by no means excluded in the writing of the Holy Scriptures, namely *non materialiter et subiective sumta*, that is, "as if the divine writers had written without and against their will, without consciousness and unwillingly; for they wrote voluntarily, with will and knowledge" (*ac si citra et contra voluntatem suam inscii ac inviti scripserint divini amanuenses, sponte enim, volentes scientesque scripserunt*). And like the Church Fathers, Quenstedt explicitly rejects ecstasy in his exposition of the expression *φερόμενοι*. He writes: "The holy writers are called by the Holy Spirit *φερόμενοι*, driven, moved, impelled, by no means in the sense as if they had been absent-minded, as the enthusiasts claim of themselves and the heathen invent such enthusiasm in their prophets. Nor at all in the sense as if even the prophets themselves had not understood their prophecies or what they were to write, which was once the error of the Montanists, Phrygians or Cataphrygians and Priscillianists" (*Dicuntur autem φερόμενοι, acti, moti, agitati a Spiritu Sancto nequaquam, ac si mente fuerint alienati, uti prae se ferunt Enthusiastae et qualem εν&ονοιαζόν in suis prophetis fingunt gentiles. Nequaquam etiam, ac si ipsi quoque prophetae suas prophetias, antea quae scriberent, non intellexerint, qui Montanistarum, Phrygastarum aut Cataphrygarum et Priscillianistarum olim error fuit.*) [[Google](#)]

It is therefore an historically untrue assertion when, for example, Luthardt says with regard to the orthodox doctrine of inspiration:⁷⁹⁸⁾ "The relationship of the Holy Spirit to Scripture is not conceived through the own spiritual activity of the biblical writers [!], but only externally mediated by the hand of the writers." Cremer departs even further from the path of historical truth when he says of the dogmatists' doctrine of inspiration: "This doctrine of inspiration was a pure novelty. It is true that only the concept of ecstasy was missing for the renewal of the mantic doctrine of inspiration of Philo and the old apologists, which was unanimously abandoned by the Church in opposition to Montanism. But the absence of this concept only worsened

798) [Compendium](#)¹⁰, S. 332.

the state of affairs by degrading mantic inspiration to a mechanical one." It can be seen that Cremer had completely lost control both of the historical facts and of himself when he wrote the foregoing words. The derision of the more recent theologians of the expressions *amanuenses*, *calami*, etc., does no credit to their understanding or to their sense of truth. It is a mild term when Philippi calls him "unintelligent".

5. The objections to the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. [^]

The objections against the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures form an exceedingly sad chapter. In this respect, they stand next to the objections raised against the *satisfactio vicaria Christi*.⁷⁹⁹⁾ He who denies the vicarious satisfaction of Christ denies the essence of Christian faith, because only that is Christian faith which has Christ as its object in his vicarious satisfaction.⁸⁰⁰⁾ He who denies the inspiration of Scripture, that is, denies that the Word of the apostles and prophets is God's own infallible Word, destroys, as much as there is in him, the foundation of the Christian Church, because, according to Eph. 2:20, the Christian Church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Nor is it to be forgotten that anyone who denies the inspiration of Scripture becomes *eo ipso* a critic of Scripture and as a critic of Scripture, which after all as God's Word does not want to be criticized but believed, falls into the Matt. 11:25 divine judgment described above. None of us, even if he were a doctor in all four faculties, can deny the inspiration of Scripture without suffering damage to his natural mental powers. This fact also appears from the nature of the arguments which are brought against the inspiration of Scripture. These arguments are clearly recognizably below the level of God's natural powers, which remained with us men even after the Fall. Against the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures was and is objected:

1. the different style in the individual books of the Scripture.⁸⁰¹⁾ The different style, however, is fact. Isaiah

799) The objections to the *satisfactio vicaria* are refuted in the doctrine of the work of Christ, [II, 416](#).

800) 1 Cor. 2:2; 15:1-3; Jn. 1:29.

801) [Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 251](#). Instead of the different styles, one also addresses the "differences in writing" of the individual writers. Thus Gray according to Hofmann in [Baier-Walther 1, 101 f.](#)

writes differently than Amos, John differently than Paul, etc. Also the old dogmatists point out very certain. Quenstedt, for example, writes:⁸⁰²⁾ *Magna est inter sacros scriptores quoad stylum et genus dicendi diversitas*. ["There is great diversity among the sacred writers as to the style and kind of speech."] To recognize this, one does not need to understand the basic Hebrew and Greek texts. Translations also express this difference in style. Now this difference in style is said to contradict the inspiration of Scripture. The argument runs like this: If God were the actual author of the Scriptures, or, what is the same, if the Scriptures were really the Word of God, then one and the same style would have to be found in all books of the Scriptures. The difference of style, it has been emphatically said, deals the "death blow" to the doctrine of the divine inspiration of Scripture. Nitzsch-Stephan (p. 251) makes the mocking remark that the old Lutheran theology had not allowed itself to be misled in the least by the difference of style, but had stuck without wavering to the verbal inspiration. We say: That was very reasonable of the old Lutheran theology. For the matter stands thus: The different style does not contradict inspiration, but is required by it, because God did not speak merely through one man, but through several men, each of whom had his own certain style, and which God used for the communication of his Word as he found it in the individual writers. To put it a little more learnedly, there is no human style *in abstracto*, but always only *in concreto*, that is, in the individual human persons. No man has ever seen or perceived a style that would have been detached from the persons who wrote it. But why did not God write His own divine style, so as to place the *πασα γραφή θεόπνευστος* irrefutably in the light even externally? The Scripture answers to this that God could not use His own divine or heavenly style, because the heavenly style does not suit us men here on earth. This is expressly testified to by the Scriptures. According to 2 Cor. 12:4 Paul was caught up into the heavenly paradise and heard words there. But they were words that are not suitable for speaking on earth (*ἀρρητα ρήματα α οὐκ ἐξὸν ἀνθρώπῳ λαλῆσαι*; Luther: "which no man can say").

802) *Systema* I, 111.

The heavenly style, which is not applicable here on earth, we will understand once in heaven. Therefore, it stands that the objection raised by the difference of style against inspiration does not reveal understanding, but the opposite of it. But our old dogmatists speak very intelligently about this. Thus Quenstedt says: "As the sacred writers were educated or accustomed to speak and write more loftily or more simply, so the Holy Spirit used them, and wished to adapt and ascribe to themselves the nature of men." ⁸⁰³⁾ We have an analogue for this "condescension" in the person of Christ in the state of humiliation. Under the condition that Christ had to fulfill the law and suffer and die in the place of men, it was necessary that He should not go about in His divine glory in the Jewish land (otherwise everyone from Dan to Bersaba would have fled from Him), but should humble Himself and be made as a man by signs (σχήματι ενεθεῖς ὡς ἀνθρώπος, Phil. 2:7). Thus, even assuming that God wanted to speak to men, He had to renounce His divine or heavenly style and condescend to the human style (*condescendere, attemperare*) in order to be endured and understood by men. How this was possible, of course, eludes our "cognitive grasp", just as the *unio personalis* of God and man and especially the fact remains an incomprehensible mystery to us, how the Son of God could condescend to death on the cross without shedding or diminishing his divinity. But as the latter fact stands immovably — for the Lord of glory, God's Son, was crucified — ⁸⁰⁴⁾ so also the fact stands firmly that God's speech in Scripture does not cease to be fully God's Word through condescension to human speech and to the human style of the writers. This is evident from all passages of Scripture in which Scripture word and God's

 803) Systema I, 109: *Prout informati aut assuefacti erant ad sublimius humiliusve loquendi scribendique genus, sic eodem usus Spiritus Sanctus sese indoli hominum attemperare et condescendere voluit.* ["As they were informed or accustomed to a higher or lower manner of speaking and writing, so by the same use the Holy Spirit wished to conform and condescend to the character of men."] Quenstedt adds: *Res easdem per alios magnificentius, per alios tenuius exprimere; quod vero has et non alias phrases, has et non alias voces vel aequipollentes adhibuerunt scriptores sacri, hoc unice ab instinctu et inspiratione divina est.* ["To express the same things more magnificently by others, and more minutely by others; but the fact that the sacred writers used these and not other phrases, these and not other words, or their equivalents, is solely from divine instinct and inspiration."]

804) 1 Cor. 2:8; Rom. 8:32.

Word can be identified. It is therefore certain: God has given us men through men (διὰ τον προφήτου κτλ.) a Word, which is not, as modern theology claims, partly God's Word and partly man's Word, but is so fully God's Word that it cannot be broken even in one word (Jn. 10:35), on which, as an immutable rock, the whole church stands with its faith until the Last Day (Eph. 2:20), according to which the events in the world are directed, or as Rudelbach aptly expresses this latter thought: "Scripture is, as it were, the spiritual hour hand in the kingdom of God; the strokes of the world clock correspond to it or are rather standardized by it."⁸⁰⁵⁾

As is well known, modern theologians claim with great agreement that the old dogmatists had emphasized the "divine side" of the Scriptures so much that the "human side" had come too short. Even Philippi has been tempted to agree, at least in part, with this charge.⁸⁰⁶⁾ The strong emphasis on the divine side of Scripture on the part of the dogmatists is, however, a fact. But the dogmatists follow in this only the evangelists and apostles of Christ and Christ himself. In the first four chapters of the Gospel of Matthew, for example, the Scripture is quoted nine times, but each time according to its "divine side". For according to the divine side the scripture is considered, when we read that what is reported in those chapters from the life of Christ happened, so that the scripture would be fulfilled. According to man's word no events are directed, but according to God's Word. And when Christ overcomes the temptations of the devil reported in the fourth chapter with the "It is written", the Scripture is thereby also very decidedly observed according to its divine side. The devil is not overcome by the word of man. But the Word of God is the sword of the Spirit, with which the cunning attempts of the devil are victoriously defeated.⁸⁰⁷⁾ If we ask why the divine side of Scripture itself is so strongly emphasized, the answer is obvious. The "human side", understood in the right sense, does not stand in danger of being overlooked. Everyone sees it because the Scriptures are written in human language. However,

805) *Zeitschr. f. luth. Th. u. Kirche* 1841, Heft 4, p. 34.

806) [Doctrines of Faith I, 179](#) f. 807) Eph. 6:17.

the "divine side" stands in danger of being overlooked. Because our human mind is darkened in spiritual things after the Fall (*έσκοτισμένοι τη διαvoia*) and we are alienated from the life that is of God by the ignorance that is in us, by the blindness (*πώρωσή*) of our heart,⁸⁰⁸⁾ so this fact wants to fade into the background for us, even to disappear completely, that the Word written through men and entirely in human language is not man's word, but fully God's Word, *τα λόγια του Θεού*. Just as the Jews did not recognize Christ's Word as the Word of God, and just as modern theologians do not recognize the Scriptures as the Word of God, and therefore have also removed the Scriptures from their office of being the source and norm of theology, by the way, modern theologians do not mean the "human side" of the Scriptures at all when they say that the human side was overlooked by the ancient dogmatists. By the human side, which they have at heart, they mean the alleged errors in Scripture. Scripture should be able to be broken, so that Scripture is not seen as a "textbook" of the Christian religion, but "the pious self-consciousness of the theologizing subject" gains room for free activity.

Against the inspiration was and is further objected 2. the calling of the holy writers on historical research. This is, of course, also a fact. The evangelist Luke appeals (1:3) to the fact that he had investigated everything from the beginning. Likewise Paul appeals to the communication of historical facts by other persons, when he writes, e.g., 1 Cor. 1:11: "It has been reported to me [*έδηλώθη*, indicated, reported] of you by those of Chloe's company that there is strife among you." The argument directed from this against inspiration runs thus, "If the sacred writers were given by God what to write, why then do they appeal to their own research and to communications and news from other persons?" To this objection it must be replied that it is on the same line with what has been said about the different style. Just as the Holy Spirit used the style he found in the individual writers, so he also used the historical knowledge that the writers had acquired through their own experience or through their own

808) Eph. 4:18.

research or by communication of other persons already possessed. The example of the first day of Pentecost puts this clearly into the light. The apostles knew about the resurrection of Christ through their own experience before Pentecost. But on the first day of Pentecost they spoke, as of the other great acts of God, so also of the resurrection of Christ, "as the Spirit gave them utterance", *χαθώς το πνεῦμα ἐδίδον αὐτοῖς ἀποφθέγγεσθαι*,⁸⁰⁹⁾ In particular, it has been argued against the inspiration of the Psalms that it is absurd to suppose that the Holy Spirit should have spoken through David what he (David) felt in his heart. Thus Kahn: "Are we to suppose that what David felt in his heart was dictated by the Holy Spirit in the form of a psalm?"⁸¹⁰⁾ But that the experience in one's heart and the inspiration do not cancel each other out, David himself testifies, when it is said 2 Sam. 23:1-2: "David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue." Therefore Luther did not assume any contradiction between the "feeling in the heart" and the "inspiration", but rather highly praised this combination as a teaching method of the Holy Spirit and at the same time warned all of us against setting aside David's Psalms, which were so deeply felt in the heart, as containing only human instruction. As is well known, Luther writes on the words 2 Sam. 23:1-2: "David, the son of Jesse, said, . sweetly with psalms of Israel. The Spirit of the Lord has spoken through me, and his address has been through my tongue," among other things, as follows:⁸¹¹⁾ "What a glorious, lofty glory is this! Whoever may boast that the Spirit of the Lord speaks through him and that his tongue speaks the word of the Holy Spirit, must certainly be very sure of his things. This will not be David, Jesse's son, born in sins, but he who is raised to be a prophet by God's promise. Should he not make sweet psalms who has such a master, who teaches him and speaks through him? Hear now who has ears to hear! My speech

809) Acts 2:4.

810) The detailed quotation in [Baier-Walther 1, 102](#). About the misuse and mockery of the word "dictated" on the part of modern theology the necessary will be said later.

811) [St. L. III, 1890](#).

[*nota bene* in the Psalms] is not my speech, but he that heareth me heareth God; he that despiseth me despiseth God. For I see that many of my descendants shall not hear my words, to their great hurt. Neither we nor anyone who is not a prophet may lead such a fame. This we may do, provided we also be holy and have the Holy Spirit, that we catechumens and disciples of the prophets may boast, as those who repeat and preach what we have heard and learned from the prophets and apostles, and are also sure that the prophets taught it. These are called in the Old Testament 'the children of the prophets,' who put nothing of their own nor new, as the prophets do, but teach what they have from the prophets, and are 'Israel,' as David says, to whom he makes the psalms." — Especially in more recent times, the following objections have been raised against inspiration

3. the different readings (*variae lectiones*) found in the copies (ἀπόγραφα) of the originals (αντόγραφα) that have come down to us. Different readings in the transcripts preserved to us are, however, a fact. But we say first: it is unseemly to argue from this against the inspiration of the original writings. After all, we do not claim that the copyists of the Holy Scriptures were inspired. Clerical errors or oversights or even supposed improvements in the copies have nothing to do with the inspiration of the original. An example from civil life: If it appears that errors occurred in transcribing or printing a resolution of a legislature, e.g., of the State of Missouri, we do not reasonably conclude that the law was not adopted in a certain wording at all. That is generally conceded. Nor, therefore, should it be argued from errors found in copies of the Bible against the inspiration of the original. — But here the objection against inspiration in another form begins with force, namely in the form that an inspired scripture is of no use to us and therefore is not to be urged, because with the existence of different readings it must remain uncertain which is the original word of God. Theodor Kaftan claims:⁸¹²⁾ "That there is no fixed text is not hidden from any theologian";

812) [Modern Theology of the Old Faith 2, p. 96 f.](#)

that "the number of different readings is legion", and that it must make "a shattering impression" on a "follower of verbal inspiration", "that no one, not even he, knows to say which text is the literally inspired one". Exactly the opposite is true! Despite the variants in the copies of the Bible, we have a fixed Bible text. Luther could rightly say: "The word they shall let stand", by which, as we know, he meant the text of the Bible. To remain first with the text of the New Testament (which is said to have "legion of different readings"), we know in a two-fold way that in the existing copies the word of the apostle or, what is the same, the word of Christ has really been preserved. We know this 1. *a priori*, that is, before all human investigation, from the divine promise. When our Savior says in the high priestly prayer, Jn. 17:20, that all who come to faith until the Last Day will believe in Him through the apostle's word, He says at the same time that the apostle's word is present in the church until the Last Day. Further: Christ exhorts John 8:31-32 all believers to abide in his word: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth." With this exhortation to stick to His word, Christ says at the same time that His word will be present. If there are men who do not recognize the existing word of Christ, it is certainly on account of their blindness, that with seeing eyes they do not see, and with hearing ears they do not hear, for they do not understand.⁸¹³⁾ Further, if Christ commissions not only the apostles, but His Church until the end of days, to teach the nations all (πάντα) that He has commanded to be taught,⁸¹⁴⁾ it is at the same time stated that the doctrine of Christ will stand at the disposal of the Church until the Last Day in all parts and clearly and certainly recognizable. Christ also took care of the text of the Old Testament. When he says specifically with respect to the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures that they cannot be broken (λυνθῆναι, John 10:35), he is certainly advocating a fixed text of the Old Testament. He does the same when he says Luke 16:29: "They have (εχονσιν) Moses and the

813) Matt. 13:13 ff. 814) Matt. 28:20.

Prophets; let them hear the same." Likewise, in the temptation with the γεγραπται, Christ uses the text of the Old Testament as an unalterably fixed text, Matt. 4. We do not read that the devil objected to "different readings" against it. We know, therefore, *a priori*, before all investigation, from the divine promise and from Christ's testimony, that we have in the Scriptures, which stand in command of the Church, a fixed text, or, what is the same, the doctrine of the apostles and prophets, resp. of God, in spite of the *variae lectiones* in the copies. But we also come to the same result 2. *a posteriori*, by scientific investigation. We can establish by human scientific investigation the fact that in the "Legion" of variants there is not the slightest change in any Christian doctrine. Modern theologians have also expressed themselves to this effect. Luthardt:⁸¹⁵⁾ "We may be certain, and research confirms it, that the biblical text is preserved to us in all essentials." This is also conceded by the actual textual critics who are to be taken seriously. Luthardt's expression that the biblical text is preserved to us "in all essentials" needs further definition, because it is misleading. It could be understood, and has been understood, as if, on the basis of the biblical text before us, we could recognize Christian doctrine approximately, but not in all parts and with complete certainty. But this is a mistake. Exactly the opposite is true. Anyone who compares the text of the Greek New Testament in a recent text-critical treatment, e.g. by Tischendorf or by Westcott and Hort or by Nestle, with the so-called *textus receptus*, which was established before actual text-critical research began, or as A. B. Bruce- Glasgow puts it, "*when the science of textual criticism was unborn*".⁸¹⁶⁾ Whoever undergoes the effort of this textual comparison is radically cured of the fear as if by the collection of the many thousands of variants,⁸¹⁷⁾ which we owe to recent textual criticism, any Christian doctrine would undergo a change. We have much to find fault with the five-volume *The Expositors Greek Testament*. It is edited from the modern-theological point of view. But we

815) Comp. 10, p. 334. 816) *The Expositor's Greek Testament* I, 52.

817) Bruce calls it, op. cit., p. 55, "a formidable affair" and refers to Tischendorf's "eighth edition in two large octavos".

do not blame the editor and the collaborators for agreeing to reprint the *textus receptus*, "representing the Greek text as known to Erasmus in the sixteenth century". Deviations from the *textus receptus* are added in notes. A twofold reason is given for retaining the old text: 1. the fact that this text is the basis of the English translation of the Bible (Authorized Version); 2. the fact that the more recent textual critics, "though they had done much to produce a purer text," did not agree in their judgment in many cases, and their results could not be regarded as conclusive.⁸¹⁸⁾ Bruce is a modern theologian throughout. He too gives up the "inerrancy" of Scripture. But he nevertheless very emphatically points out that a large number of the various readings are of so little importance that they could be disregarded altogether as "not affecting the sense."⁸¹⁹⁾ In short, it stands, as has already been noted, thus:

818) Op. cit., p. 52.

819) Even well-meaning and in other respects theologically trained people have inadequate ideas about the "legion" of different readings. The legion shrinks very considerably if we take a closer look at the different readings in relation to its nature. We can visualize this if we take, for example, two German Bibles in old and new orthography side by side and compare even only the text of the New Testament. There we have immediately after the different orthography thousands of *variae lectiones*. Similarly it stands with thousands of different readings in the copies of the Greek New Testament available to us. The variants concern only the orthography. This is also pointed out by Bruce when he addresses variants "not affecting the sense, but merely the spelling or grammatical form of words." He first points to the large class of proper nouns that come to us in different orthographies, such as — Ναζαρέτ — Ναζαρέθ, Δαβίδ — Δανείδ, Ἡλίας — Ἡλείας, Μωσῆς — Μωνσῆς, Ἰωάννης — Ἰωάνης — etc. Among other insignificant variations, Bruce mentions the presence or absence of the final *v* in verbs (ἔλεγε, ἔλεγεν); the utilization or insertion of *μ* (λήψομαι, λήμψομαι); the assimilation or non-assimilation of *έν* and *συν* in compound verbs (σνζητεῖν, ανζητεῖν; εκκακεῖν, ενκακεῖν); the doubling of *μ*, *ν*, *ξ* or the opposite (μαμμωνάς, μωννάς; γέννημα, γένη μα; ἐπιγράφει, ἐπιράπτει); the binding or separation of syllables (ονκ ἐτι, ουκέτι); ὄντως for οντω, the aorist forms εἶπον, ἦλθον, etc. for the aorist forms in α (εἶπαν, ἦλθαν); the single and the double augment in certain verbs (εδννάμην, ἡδννάμην; εμελλον, ημελλον). Those who wish to read up more on the diversities of this kind will find much material compiled by Winer. (*Grammatik d. neutest. Sprachidiom* 6, p. 39 ff.).

A comparison of recent text-critical treatment of the New Testament with the *textus receptus*, on which Luther's translation of the Bible is essentially based, convinces us of the fact that the establishment of Christian doctrine is completely independent of recent text criticism. This is not to say that textual criticism should be completely eliminated from the theological study program of our time. In our theological institution in St. Louis we also introduce our students to recent textual criticism. This is part of the complete external equipment of a theologian of our time. 1. we know *a priori* from the divine promise that in the Bible, which is in our hands, we have Christ's Word, which is to be taught in the Church and by the Church until the Last Day. (2) We also recognize *a posteriori* the marvelous divine providence which has so held its hand over the text of the Bible that, in spite of the *variae lectiones*, not a single Christian doctrine is called in question.

The following may serve as a more detailed description of the situation: The Holy Scriptures are arranged in such a way that one and the same doctrine is expressed in several, mostly in many places. This is also expressed by the words of the apostle Phil. 3:1: "To write the same things to you, (τα αὐτά, one and the same) to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe." Now, if the case arises that, as a result of a variant at hand, we must dispense with a point of evidence for a certain doctrine — incidentally, a rare case — we have sufficient points of evidence for that doctrine that are critically unchallenged. Attention should be drawn here to a prudence rule that is important for disputations. *Disputandi causa* one refrains from establishing a critically contested reading. For example, in a dispute with Unitarians about the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, do not use 1 John 5:7-8 as a point of evidence. The words of the three witnesses in heaven: "the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit" are missing in the old Greek copies. Now someone can be convinced on the basis of human-scientific research that the words in question stood in the original. Also we, for our person, are of this conviction on the basis of the patristic quotation from Cyprian.⁸²⁰⁾ But

820) We believe that J. E. F. Sander on this passage has not yet been refuted. Also what Strobel (*Zeitschr. f. luth. Theol.* 1854, p. 135 f.) says against Sander,

in a dispute with a Unitarian who contests the authenticity of 1 John 5:7, we immediately abandon this passage as a point of evidence. The doctrine of the holy Trinity is not in the least questioned by this, because this doctrine is clearly testified — also with coordination of the three persons in God — in such scriptural words that are not critically contested, e.g. Matt. 28:19: "Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" and 2 Cor. 13:13: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

Especially against the inspiration were and are brought into the field

4. The alleged contradictions in the Scriptures and erroneous statements in general. Philippi⁸²¹⁾ rebukes already at the time when he himself had not yet found the right position on the Scriptures, namely still admitted the possibility of errors in the Scriptures, the "modern hunt for differences", which has its reason primarily "in the self-congratulatory outrage of presuppositionlessness, whose representatives thought to be allowed to release themselves from the presupposition that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God, but instead put themselves into the temple of God and presupposed that they themselves are God". With regard to the alleged contradictions in Scripture, the matter, briefly summarized, lies thus: With only some good will the possibility of the balance can be proved easily in the vast majority of cases, and the proof of the possibility of the balance must be enough for every fair-minded man. Ebrard⁸²²⁾ should not have blamed Chemnitz

that "bottomless critical arbitrariness" sets in, if one does not let the old copies decide in the criticism, is not true. In this, the newer criticism is right when it insists that the patristic quotations often have the decisive importance even over the oldest copies. If Schömann was right in his edition of Cicero's *De Natura Deorum* 3 (Berlin 1865, p. 99), we have an analogue for 1 John 5:7-8 in the field of profane literature. Schömann, in his edition of *De Natura Deorum* I, 41, inserts the words *ne intereat* and remarks in a note: "These words are missing in the manuscripts, but are preserved in the quotation of this passage in Augustin, *Epist. 56, tom. II, p. 267, ed. Basil. 1569.*" We must return to this subject again in the integrity of the text.

821) *Glaubenslehre* 11, 199.

822) *Wissenschaftliche Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte* 2, p. 59.

for being satisfied in the Gospel Harmony "to give probable things where he was not able to give anything certain". Chemnitz' principle is the only reasonable one. Chemnitz' principle is the only reasonable one. In more recent times, A. T. Robertson has also expressed this aptly when he says:⁸²³⁾ "In the explanation of a difficulty, it must always be borne in mind that even a merely possible explanation (*possible explanation*) is sufficient to meet the one who raises the objection. If several possible explanations present themselves, the assertion that the difference is uncomensurable becomes all the more unreasonable. It is a superfluous work of supererogation to go further and to declare that this or that explanation is the real solution of the problem. Sometimes, because new light stands at our command, this may be possible; but it is never necessary. Because we have only a scanty account of some points in the Gospels, it may be impossible in several cases to offer a satisfactory solution on every point. The harmonist has done his duty when he has given an acceptable (reasonable) explanation of the problem before him. ... It must also be remembered that there is as much prejudice against the supernatural element in the Gospels as favorable judgment for the accuracy of the narratives." We will have to agree with Robertson. To this we would add: if a case should occur to us where we cannot see the possibility of a balance, we as Christians leave the matter alone, because we believe the infallibility of Scripture on the authority of the Son of God, John 10:35: Ου δυνάται λυθῆναι ἡ γραφή. All objections to the inerrancy of Scripture are unworthy of a Christian because they set human judgment against Christ's judgment. Luther also knows and practices apologetics when it applies. Luther also knows and practices apologetics when it is necessary to come to the aid of unbelievers and Christians according to their flesh. But when he describes the position to the Scriptures, which is fitting for the Christian as a Christian, he uses decisive, even harsh words. He says, for example:⁸²⁴⁾ "They [the Sophists] say that Scripture is much too weak to overthrow heretics; it must be reasoned and come from the brain; from this it must be proved that faith is right, since our faith is

823) In Broadus, *A Harmony of the Gospels* 8, p. 232.

824) On 1 Petr. 3:15. [St. L. IX. 1238 f.](#)

is above all reason and God's power alone. Therefore, if men will not believe, be silent; for thou art not guilty of forcing them to believe that the Scriptures are God's Book or Word of God; it is enough that thou hast given thy reason. As if they should so take it up, saying, Thou preachest not to hold the doctrine of men, when St. Peter and Paul, even Christ himself, were men; when thou hearest such men as are so blinded and obdurate as to deny that this is the Word of God, which Christ and the apostles spake and wrote, or to doubt it, only hold thy peace, speak not a word to them, and let them go. Speak only thus: I will give you reason enough from the Scriptures; if you want to believe it, good; if not, always go. Then you say: Then the Word of God must stand in disgrace. Leave that to God." Luther considers the viewpoint according to which we do not consider what Christ and the apostles have spoken and written to be the Word of God and without error to be absolutely unworthy of a Christian. Luther also applies this to the historical reliability of Scripture in all cases where there is a difference between profane writers and the statements of Scripture. He says:⁸²⁵⁾ "I use them [the profane writers] in such a way that I am not forced to contradict Scripture. For I believe that in the Scriptures the true God speaks, but in the histories good men according to their ability show their diligence and faithfulness (but as men), or at least that the copyists could have erred." Likewise, Luther holds to the inerrancy of Scripture when it comes to a difference with natural scientists. He says in regard to the doctrine of the creation of the world:⁸²⁶⁾ "If Moses writes that God created heaven and earth and what is in them in six days, let it remain that there have been six days, and let no gloss be found how six days have been one day. But if thou canst not hear how it hath been six day, give glory to the Holy Spirit, that he be more learned than thou." As for harmonizing the Evangelists accounts, which seem to contradict each other, Luther is content (just as Chemnitz was in the "Gospel Harmony") to point out several possible ways of reconciling them.⁸²⁷⁾ He doubts the correctness of the reports so little,

825) [St. L. XIV, 491](#). 826) [St. L. III, 21](#).

827) [St. L. VII, 1780 f.](#)

that he declares even apparent discrepancies in them to be the work and wisdom of the Holy Spirit.⁸²⁸⁾ The proper position towards the Scriptures when it comes to "contradictions" in them was expressed by a speaker at the August Conference about thirty years ago.⁸²⁹⁾ He said, among other things: "Just as the historical appearance of Jesus Christ, so also individual historical events can be viewed from different points of view. To construct contradictions from this is petty. Other things we let rest, wait for the time when they will be cleared up, and die confidently, even if they do not happen, with the testimony of the truth of the Bible on our lips and in our hearts... We find no reason, then, to abandon the position toward Scripture which the Church has taken toward it from the beginning, and we continue to praise as its glory that through it God speaks to men, and that it is his infallible address. And this also is the position of Christ and his apostles." Philippi quotes⁸³⁰⁾ from [Philipp Schaff](#) (*Geschichte der apostolischen Kirche*, 1854, [S. 101](#)): "The full and unconditional reverence for the holy Word of God, which we find more or less lacking in the whole Schleiermacherian school, demands in such cases, where science is not yet able to clear up the darkness, a humble containment of reason under the obedience of faith, or a temporary suspension of the decisive judgment in the hope that further and deeper research will succeed in arriving at more satisfactory results." Quite recently we read in the "Deutsche Lehrerzeitung"⁸³¹⁾ among other things the following words about "contradictions" in Scripture: "You point out contradictions which you cannot solve with your intellect, but you also underline that you are convinced of the conditionality of your knowledge. Exactly the same is true of me. Such and similar 'facts', whose number I could easily still increase, are not unknown to me — and probably to no attentive Bible reader. But can and may we assert with certainty that all that appears to your and my

828) [St. L. VII, 1297](#).

829) Pastor Schulze-Walsleben. *L. u. W.* 1891. p. 379. [*sic* - should be [p. 353 ff.](#) Quote is from [page 357](#)]

830) [Doctrine of Faith I I. 200](#).

831) Year 36. no. 17. dated Berlin, April 28:1923. The words are taken from a letter signed by Rettor (ret.) August Grünweller in Rheydt and addressed to a teacher in Saxony.

mind as a contradiction will under no circumstances ever be brought into harmony, that all that seems to us at present to be inconsistent will not yet resolve itself into harmony in the light of a better or unconditional knowledge? 'Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.' Shouldn't this apostle's word also apply to our case and your 'facts'? We both recognize that the Holy Scriptures contain 'contradictions' for our minds, but the conclusions we draw from them stand in diametrical opposition. You conclude based on the 'primitive' use of your mind: Contradictions show up in Scripture, consequently it cannot be inerrant. I conclude thus: Scripture, according to the clear statement of Him to whom it bears witness, is inviolable truth; therefore the 'contradictions' must be able to be resolved in the light of a higher or more perfect knowledge. Although you are convinced of the insufficiency and conditionality of your knowledge, you take a rationalistic standpoint; I, because I do not trust my limited reason with a safe judgment in divine things, take the standpoint of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ. For you it is a question of intellect, for me a question of faith."

That Philippi rightly speaks of a "difference hunt" among modern theologians is evident from the fact that men like Volck in Dorpat [[now Tartu](#)] find an obvious contradiction between the numerical entries 1 Cor. 10:8 (23,000) and 4 Mos. 25:9 (24,000), while in the mentioned passages themselves the solution of the apparent contradiction is very clearly indicated.⁸³²⁾ *Lehre und Wehre* says about it: "If one reads the two quoted passages one after the other and spares oneself further reflection, the thought probably settles in that the Israelites who perished in the wilderness are counted differently here, and that only one of the given sums can be correct. On closer examination of the story in Numbers 25, however, one notices a difference among those struck down by the wrath of God. The chiefs of the people, the actual ringleaders, who had seduced Israel to fornication and idolatry, were to be hanged, others are strangled by the judges with the sword. Num. 24:4-6.

832) [L. u. W. 1886. p. 319](#) f. [G. Stöckhardt]

Most of them were taken away by the plague, probably a pestilence. How, if Paul 1 Cor. 10:8 has in mind the 23,000 who were directly struck down by God in contrast to those who were executed by human hands, which could have been about 1000, while Numbers 25:9 summarily includes all those who were killed? Or if all 24,000 mentioned by Moses died of the plague, it is not said that the 24,000 died in one day, while according to Paul the 23,000 died in one day. Paul describes the plagues of that one day, while Moses speaks at all of the judgment provoked by the fornication of Israel. It is obviously, also after naturally reasonable calculation, hastily judged, if one puts here the one number with the other in contradiction. And so it is in other cases." *Lehre und Wehre* then reminds us of what was said earlier, namely, that we must reasonably be satisfied with the possibility of balancing apparent contradictions: "If in two different places of the Bible one and the same event is described differently, it is obvious that different features, different sides of the same thing are brought out here and there. We would have to know exactly all the secondary circumstances and details of the main fact in question in order to see how these different traits are connected. But since, as a rule, only some data are communicated to us, since many circumstances are unknown to us, since all kinds of intermediate elements are missing, it is often impossible for us to say with certainty how the different traits were in reality connected and how they had a place in a frame. Various possibilities can be thought of. And it is subjective arbitrariness, even crying injustice, which one inflicts on the Scriptures, if one reduces different reports to contradiction and discrepancies of the reporters. As long as no contradictory opposition is proven in the different statements, the recognition of contradictions demanded by today's scriptural science is nothing else than scientific fraud. ... It is true, the harmonistics must move within modest limits. In numerous cases it is impossible to construct a complete, exact overall picture from the different statements of the evangelists about one and the same miraculous work of Jesus and to assign to each of the different secondary features mentioned by the individual evangelists

its place in the whole. It is much better to answer the question of how the various individual circumstances are related to each other. It is much better to answer the question, how the different individual circumstances are connected, which was the time sequence of the individual events, with *Non liquet* [it is not clear], than to pass off a self-declared combination for Evangelical truth. But as long as the different traits do not cancel each other out and exclude each other — and this can never be brought to evidence — it is, even judged purely humanly, folly and foolhardiness to re-stamp the differences as contradictions." This is then exemplified in the Easter story, and finally added: "For the rest, we see from this diversity of the Evangelical accounts that the holy Evangelists, in writing their writings, truly did not allow themselves to be guided by shrewd calculation and reckoning on the impression the readers would receive from their Gospels. Otherwise they would have harmonized more. The following would have followed then more exactly and more anxiously the writing of the predecessor. No, a higher hand has ordered and shaped everything here. The Holy Spirit of God has here shifted and ruled at His pleasure, as it were quite carelessly and impartially, without fearing that future criticism of His holy work might do any harm to His authority."⁸³³⁾

Furthermore, a whole series of real or merely assumed facts have been objected against the inspiration, e.g. "inaccurate quotations" of the New Testament writers from the Old Testament, minor things that are not decent to the Holy Spirit, solecisms and barbarisms etc., also single Bible passages like 1 Cor. 7:12 and Bible passages.

First of all, concerning the inaccurate quotations of the New Testament writers from the Old Testament, Kahnis asks whether one really has worthy thoughts of the Holy Spirit if one ascribes to Him "all the inaccurate quotations" from the Old Testament found in the New Testament.⁸³⁴⁾ The Englishman Row says:⁸³⁵⁾ "The manner in which the Old Testament

833) A very detailed discussion of the "alleged contradictions in the Bible" is offered following the dispute in the Baltic provinces [L. u. W. 1893, pp. 33-273](#) [G. Stöckhardt]. Cf. also Proceeding of the [Ev.-Luth. Synodical Conference 1902, pp. 5-56](#) [Ed. - by E.A.W. Krauss] These two writings probably discuss all the chief places where contradictions have been found.

834) The longer quotation from Kahnis in [Baier-Walther 1, 102 f.](#)

835) Quoted in Dr. R. Watts, [The Rule of Faith, London 1885, p. 233.](#)

is quoted in the New, gives the death blow to all theories of a mechanical [!] and literal inspiration." We put here somewhat abbreviated and with some additions what we wrote in regard to the "inaccurate quotations" at the time of the Bible dispute in the Baltic provinces in *Lehre und Wehre* under the heading "The Form of Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament"⁸³⁶⁾. It states there: When the evangelists and apostles tell "the stories" so "passed among them" (Luke 1:1), or when they set forth the saving doctrines, they insert with an "as it stands written," "as the Scripture says," etc. When they present the doctrines of salvation, they insert sayings from the Old Testament into their speech, thus proving the fulfillment of the events prophesied in the Old Testament in the New Testament, or they bring in the testimony of the Old Testament for their doctrines. Here, however, we encounter the phenomenon, which is striking at first glance, that the words, which are expressly cited as words of the Old Testament with the "as it stands written", "as the Scripture says", nevertheless not infrequently deviate significantly in form from the Old Testament Scriptural word. Luther writes, "So one often sees how the evangelists introduce the prophets somewhat changed."⁸³⁷⁾ According to our count, there are 47 quotations from the Old Testament in the Epistle to the Romans, but only 24 of them can be considered literal quotations. The formal deviations from the wording of the Old Testament text are of various kinds. In some cases the Old Testament text is expanded (e.g. Is. 61:1; Luke 4:18), in many cases it is contracted (Is. 8:22; 9:1; Matt. 4:16), in several cases the sentences are rearranged (Hos. 2:23; Rom. 9:26), very often several passages are merged into one (Jer. 32:6ff.; Zech. 11:12, 13; Matt. 27:9). That the actual meaning of the Old Testament scriptural words is always preserved in this way of quotation stands *a priori* for all those who believe that the evangelists and apostles spoke and wrote by the Holy Spirit. It can also be proven a posteriori in the light of the New Testament that the intended meaning of the Old Testament scriptural passage is no different from that expressed by the quotation in the New Testament. Luther writes in the cited passage: "[It] is to be known that the evangelists care nothing that they do not attract even all the words

836) L. u. W. 32, 77-82. 837) Erl. Ausg. 10, 16.

of the prophets; it has been enough for them that they lead the same opinion and indicate the fulfillment". And after the above-mentioned words: "Thus one often sees how the evangelists introduce the prophets somewhat changed," Luther continues: "But it all happens without a break in the understanding and opinion."⁸³⁸⁾ However, the question of the actual reason for the often so conspicuous and thoroughgoing formal deviation from the wording of the Old Testament still stands. Now, for example, when a pastor introduces passages of Scripture with an explicit "Thus writes St. Paul," "Thus writes St. John," etc., we expect him to adhere to the wording of the passage to be quoted. We would rightly find it unseemly if he were to depart from the wording with respect to the form of the quotation in the way that is evidently done by the evangelists and apostles with respect to the Old Testament scriptural word. One has tried to explain this in various ways. For example, one has put forward the view that the form of the Old Testament passages found in the New Testament was the original one. If we now have a different wording in the relevant passages of the Old Testament, this is because we no longer have the original text of the Old Testament, but only — at least in the relevant passages — a very corrupted text.⁸³⁹⁾ There, however, the difference with regard to the wording would be explained. But this explanation is inadmissible. Apart from other things, the history of the text of the Old

838) Cf. the series of articles by D. Stöckhardt in "[Lehre und Wehre](#)", [Jahrg. 30. 31](#), [Ed.: *sic* - not 31-32] under the heading "Weissagung und Erfüllung". These articles deal with all the chief places where one thinks to have found inaccurate or erroneous quotations from the Old Testament in the Gospel of Matthew: Is. 7:14 — Matt. 1:18-23. Micah 5:1 — Matt. 2:5-6. Hos. 11:1 — Matt. 2:15. Jer. 31:15 — Matt. 2:17-18. Is. 11:1; Zech. 6:12 — Matt. 2:23. Is. 40:3 — Matt. 3:1-3. Is. 8:23; 9:1 — Matt. 4:12-16. Is. 53:4 — Matt. 8:17. Is. 42:1 ff — Matt. 12:15-21. Is. 6:9-10 — Matt. 13:13-15. Ps. 78:2 — Matt. 13:34-35. Zech. 9:9 — Matt. 21:1-5. Ps. 118:26 — Matt. 21:9. Ps. 118:22-23 — Matt. 21:42-44. Ps. 8:3 -Matt. 21:16. Ps. 110:1 — Pastor. 22:43-46. Ex. 3:6 — Matt. 22:31-32. Dan. 9:23 ff. — Matt. 24:15. Zech. 13:7 — Matt. 26:31 ff. Zech. 11:12, 13; Jer. 32:6 ff. — Matt. 27:3 ff. (Here it is proven that in Matthew also Jeremiah is quoted.) Ps. 22:19 — Matt. 27:35. Ps. 22:2 — Matt. 27:46.

839) Thus Ludovicus Capellus II. Cf. Pfeiffer, *Critica Sacra*, Leipzig 1712, p. 105 ff.

Testament knows nothing of such a corruption of the same. Others have tried to find the cause of the deviation in an error of memory on the part of the sacred writers. The latter would have wanted to quote the Old Testament exactly and would have meant to quote, however, would have been wrong thereby. Especially in recent times, the "inaccurate quotations" of the evangelists and apostles have been cited as a proof against the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures (Kahnis, Row). But apart from the fact that the assumption of "oversights" on the part of the apostles contradicts the latter's own statements that the Holy Spirit speaks through them (1 Cor. 2:13; 14:37; 2 Cor. 13:13; 1 Petr. 1:12), the theory that attributes the deviations from the Old Testament text to "oversights" or "memory errors" in quoting must also appear untenable to purely human observation, as will be further explained below.

There is only one explanation for this often so free switching with the wording of the Old Testament scriptural passages in the New Testament. The explanation is given in scriptural passages like 1 Petr. 1:10-12, where it is explicitly declared that the same Holy Spirit, who was in the prophets of the Old Testament and spoke through them, now also testified in the New Testament through the evangelists and apostles. This testimony, of course, included the introduction and exposition of the Old Testament scriptural passages. Thus, in the quotations from the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit quotes Himself, as it were. And the Holy Spirit has power and free disposal over his words; in quoting the Old Testament scriptural word, he makes, as it were, a "new text," as Luther puts it, thereby at the same time interpreting the Old Testament text. The evangelists and apostles, driven by the Holy Spirit, therefore do not quote as well as make a "grab" at the Scriptures. Here belongs what Luther says of the Pentecost sermon of the apostles: "How powerfully they reach into the Scriptures, as if they had studied them for a hundred thousand years and had learned them at their best! I could not make such a certain grip on the Scriptures, even though I am a doctor of the Holy Scriptures. ... So God proves by the greatest foolishness and folly of the wretched, weak beggars the greatest wisdom that has come on earth, that no one can imitate them, neither Annas nor Caiaphas nor any man on earth."⁸⁴⁰ Flacius

840) Erl. Ed. 5, 183.

writes: "It is to be noted that the Old Testament is usually quoted by the sacred writers of the New Testament in such a way that they have looked at the meaning and have added more the fulfillment of the prophecy than the words of the prophecy itself. But this will not seem surprising or audacious to anyone who is convinced of what the matter itself requires, namely, that the same Spirit spoke through the mouth of the evangelists who opened the mouth of the prophets; then that the office of the prophets was to foretell what was to come, but the office of the evangelists was to recount what had happened. Therefore, since the Spirit of God does not write out the prophecies of those in the New Testament, but interprets them, it must not be demanded that He enumerate the individual words." ⁸⁴¹⁾ A. Pfeifer [ed. or Pfeiffer] remarks: "That the passages of the Old Testament have not always been cited in the New Testament according to the wording (αυτολεξεί) does not come from a corruption of the text now before us, but from the fact that by inspiration of the Holy Spirit an explanation of the actual meaning of the passage is given." ⁸⁴²⁾ The same (*Critica Sacra*, p. 109 f.): "In the New Testament the sayings of the Old Testament are not always quoted according to the words, but often according to the sense, and freely, sometimes from the Hebrew text, sometimes from the Septuagint, sometimes from both. What need is there of many words, if no contradiction is found here? The Holy Spirit has revealed the Old Testament and reserved to Himself the right to declare that in the New Testament. Where this has been done by the Septuagint, its translation has been retained; where this has not been done, it is quoted according to the basic text. Repeatedly, the Holy Spirit has not bound himself either to that translation or to the words of the basic text, but has expressed the meaning in new words. Whatever be the case, the same Holy Spirit, the best interpreter of His own words, has spoken in both places." Very well also writes Dr. Watts in the above-mentioned work, pp. 236 ff: "The New Testament writers often change the wording of the passages which they quote from the Old Testament in order to give an authentic exposition of them. ... This deviation from the wording is expected precisely in the circumstances in which the

 841) *Clavis Scripturae Sacrae*, P. II, p. 103. (Ed. Franks, and Leipzig 1729.)

842) *Thesaurus Hermeneuticus*, 1704, p. 59.

New Testament writers found themselves.. They were the chosen and inspired interpreters of the revelation of the Old Testament, *commissioned* by Him whose Spirit impelled the prophets of the Old Covenant to speak and write. Now, if they stood in such a relationship to the Old Testament testimony of the mystery of redemption, it would have been strange if, calling upon it, they had found it so clear that it needed no exposition and had therefore reproduced the ancient text literally in every case. True, they could have reproduced the sacred text as it stood and then added their own explanatory remarks. But in this, as elsewhere, for those who wish to prescribe rules to men who acted under the special guidance of the Holy Spirit. The apostolic admonition is appropriate: 'Who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?' Rom. 11:34. ... Inspired by the free Spirit ..., they reveal the freedom with which the Holy Spirit, who was in them, freed them, and they quote from the Septuagint where it differs from the Hebrew, and from the Hebrew where it differs from the Septuagint, and often they quote a passage in a form in which it is found neither in the Hebrew basic text nor in the Greek translation. In driving the New Testament writers to deal with the Old Testament in this way, the Holy Spirit, who is the real author of both Old Testament and New Testament revelation, was only asserting his own sovereign right. In doing so, he acted according to the law of authorship, which no one questions in the case of non-inspired writers. No one holds an author bound to stick to the exact wording of the first pronunciation when repeating an earlier statement. If one concedes such freedom to a man and regards this almost as the natural right (birthright) of human authorship, then it is as disrespectful as it is unreasonable to want to abridge the freedom of the Spirit of God."

The form of the Old Testament quotations in the New Testament does not, therefore, when properly considered, give "the death blow" to the theory of "literal inspiration," but is, on the contrary, a powerful proof of the same. Let us suppose that the evangelists and apostles were not inspired but, like other writers, were merely left to their human reasoning.

Wouldn't their quotations have turned out quite differently then? Would they not have carefully avoided all impulses that human contemplation finds in their way of quoting and would they not have quoted more literally? If one says: The right context and the right wording of the quoted passages were just not present to the apostles, then the objection is quite invalid. Assuming that they had lost both the context and the wording, there was a very simple means to remedy the deficiency. If the context and the wording of a passage to be quoted are not present, we look it up. The evangelists and apostles would have done the same; the Old Testament was at hand for them. They would have looked up the passages to be quoted, looked up the context and written out the passages exactly according to the wording. Or could someone reasonably assume that the apostles would not have taken the trouble to help their poor memory by looking up the passages, on the assumption that their readers would not notice the inaccuracy in the quotation, if such had happened to them? St. Paul, for example, regarded his readers as those "who know the law", Rom. 7:1. We think that human reason, too, if it wants to be reasonable, must refrain from declaring the deviations of the New Testament quotations from the wording of the Old Testament from an "oversight" or "error of memory" on the part of the holy writers. There is only one explanation: the Holy Spirit speaks through the apostles and switches in the same free with his own word. And just as the apparent contradictions found in the Scriptures are proof that the Scriptures are not the work of calculating men, so especially the way in which the evangelists and apostles quote the Old Testament is a powerful proof that they did not speak and write out of themselves, out of their purely human consideration, but out of inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Against the inspiration of the Scriptures it has been objected that in them there are mentioned many "little human things" or "trifles" (*levicula*), the mentioning of which is obviously not appropriate to the divine dignity of the Holy Spirit. Paul's cloak and the parchment that Paul left behind in Troas

(2 Tim. 4:13), especially the dietary instruction that Timothy should give up drinking water (ὕδρο ποτεῖν) and drink a little wine (1 Tim. 5:23) were described as such little things. In this objection is revealed most decidedly an error concerning the "ethical principles" of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit believes that faithfulness in small things is quite decent and necessary. We read Luke 16:10: "He who is faithful in the least (ἐν ἐλαχίστῳ) is faithful also in the greatest (ἐν πολλῷ), and he who is wrong in the least is wrong also in the greatest." For this even the world, if it uses its reason, still has an understanding, if it sees the great man in faithfulness in the small. But every Christian should especially agree with Luther when he says, for example:⁸⁴³⁾ "You must not think or wonder why the Holy Spirit should take pleasure in describing such evil and contemptible works (in the lives of the patriarchs), but hear what St. Paul says Rom. 15:4: 'But what is written before is written for our doctrine, that through patience and comfort of the Scriptures we may have hope.' If we firmly believe, as I do, although I believe weakly, that the Holy Spirit Himself and God, the Creator of all things, is the right master (*auctor*) of this book [the Bible] and of such bad and contemptible things as seem bad and low to the flesh, then we would have the greatest comfort from it, as St. Paul says. ... This is what the Holy Spirit means when He walks so lowly in describing His saints, that even the very smallest works of the saints are pleasing to God. It is a precious thing about a Christian man; there is nothing so small about him that is pleasing to God. Shedding blood, dying, sweating, fighting and struggling against the devil is in truth a great thing and very pleasing to God. But you must conclude: If you are faithful, then the natural, carnal and bodily works are also pleasing to God; you eat or drink, you wake or sleep, which are all bodily and natural works. Faith is such a great thing. Therefore, first of all, see to it that you become a Christian, and that the person becomes pleasing and acceptable to God through the Word, through baptism and sacrament. If the person is faithful and adheres to the Word, does not persecute it, but gives thanks to God for it,

843) [St. L. II, 469 ff.](#)

then you should not do anything else, because Solomon says in his Ecclesiastes at the 9th chapter: 'So go with joy, drink your wine with good courage; for your work pleases God. Let thy garments be always white, and let not thy head lack ointment.'" Thus, then, the ancient teachers together with the ancient dogmatists point out what important doctrines are contained in the trifles mentioned by the Apostle Paul 2 Tim. 4:13 and 1 Tim. 5:23. We see from these and other passages that the apostle Paul was not an enthusiast. He could have asked God that angels would bring him the mantle left behind in Troas together with the parchment. But because the apostle knows that God directs us men to the natural means offered by Him, as long as such means stand at our command, he gives Timothy the order to bring him the cloak and the parchment. The same is to be said of the dietary prescription. Paul directs Timothy in the latter's sickness and bodily weakness not merely to prayer, "Pray always in all intentions," ⁸⁴⁴⁾ but also to natural means, "Timothy should cease from mere drinking of water and use a little wine."⁸⁴⁵⁾ In Pauli's concern for his mantle, ancient teachers also find a reference to the apostle's poverty, in which poverty, however, he had not grown weary or wearied in carrying out his apostleship. Also Pauli's desire for the parchment reveals the apostle's zeal in the direction of his ministry.⁸⁴⁶⁾ In the apostle's word 1 Tim. 5:23 we also have a reminder that we should not burden the church of God with the human commandment of prohibition. The state or, as Luther usually puts it, the "emperor" may issue food and drink commandments, and Christians are subject to such commandments. But if the "church" takes the liberty of issuing such commandments, it falls under the sharp judgment of the apostle 1 Tim.

844) Eph. 6:18; Ps. 55:23.

845) Huther z. St.: "It goes without saying that the apostle does not want to forbid Timothy to drink water at all, but only to avoid drinking wine altogether; $\nu\delta\rho\omicron\pi\omicron\tau\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$, strictly speaking, also does not mean 'to drink water,' but 'to be a water-drinker,' and is therefore used only of one who makes water his ... exclusive drink." Likewise Winer, Gr. 6, p. 442. The verbum $\nu\delta\rho\omicron\pi\omicron\tau\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$ occurs in the New Testament only in this one place, but is not formed by the apostle, but is genuinely Greek. Proof by Ebeling *sub verbo*.

846) *L. u. W.* 32, 297-*[sic - should be p. 287]*.

4:1-5: προοέχοντες πνευμασι πλάνοις και διδασκαλίαις δαιμόνιων, because in this case it is commanded "to avoid the food that God has created, to take with thanksgiving the faithful and those who know the truth. For all the creature of God is good, and nothing reprobate that is received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer." And the result of such commandments of men on the part of the Church is given by Christ Matt. 15: God's doctrines and commandments are supplanted by the commandments of men, as we see abundantly in sectarian communities in this country. In short, in the "trifles" that Scripture mentions, there are important doctrines for reasonably seeing eyes. Anyone who judges these *levicula* to be unworthy of the Holy Spirit does not understand the Holy Spirit and Christian life and being.⁸⁴⁷⁾

847) Höneck, Dogmatik I, 351: "From these passages (1 Tim. 5:23 and 2 Tim. 4:13) two quite important principles for the Christian life can be deduced unceremoniously: from the first passage that an excessive asceticism is completely not according to the spirit of the gospel; from the other passage that only a false spirituality despises the minor things of this life and thinks itself exalted over it. But sayings of the Scriptures, which are so doctrinal, are truly not insignificant and unworthy of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit." Quenstedt I, 103: *Aliud est, rem aliquam esse leviculam, si in se spectetur et iuxta aestimationem hominum, et aliud, eandem esse leviculam, si finem attendas et sapientissimum Dei consilium. Multa in Scripturis levia videntur (quale est etiam illud de penula, quam Paulus in Troade apud Carpum reliquerat, 2 Tim. 4:13), ad quae existimant indignum esse, ut deducamus Spiritus Sancti maiestatem, quae tamen magni momenti sunt, si finem spectemus, Rom. 15:4, et sapientissimum Dei consilium, quo etiam talia divinis literis inserta sunt.* [[Google](#)] Philippi, Glaubenslehre 3 I, 261: "But the cloak at Troas, which was taken so hard by criticism, in which already the Anomoeans loved to wrap their unbelief, and the books, but especially the parchment 2 Tim. 4:13? And now even the dietary prescription of the apostle: "Drink no more water, but have a little wine for your stomach's sake, and that you are often sick," 1 Tim. 5:23. We do not want to be strange if our modern naturalists, to whom the whole salvation of mankind consists in food and drink, in clothing and, if it comes to it, in books, especially those written by themselves, and in parchment, turn the matter around next and give up only these passages in Scripture as inspired. But as far as the matter itself is concerned, the higher, moral relation in both sayings is easily recognizable. The latter prevents a false, excessive asceticism as well as an inordinate use of the earthly gifts of God, teaches both in the concrete case that all of God's creatures are good and nothing is reprehensible that is received with thanksgiving, 1 Tim. 4:4, and also to wait for the body, but so that it does not become lustful, Rom. 13:14. But the first saying shows us how the most zealous administration of even

In general, whoever addresses that it is not worthy of the Holy Spirit to mention in the Scriptures such small human things as food, drink, clothing, etc., must have forgotten beforehand that the eternal Son of God did not consider it beneath His dignity to take from the Virgin Mary a human nature into a finely divine self, to be wrapped in swaddling clothes and to be taken into a manger. Whoever stands worshipping before the miracle in the manger at Bethlehem no longer finds it strange, but quite in order, that so many "human trifles" are mentioned in the Scriptures, which are the Word of God. After all, God loves men together with their trifles. Luther:⁸⁴⁸) "Moses said to Pharaoh in Exodus 10: 'Our cattle shall go with us, and not a hoof shall remain behind.' Not only shall the men, the women, the children, and the cattle go out of Egypt, but all that we have, even the least of our claws, we will not leave behind. ... Yes, listen to Christ, he does it even better, Matt. 10: 'But now the very hairs of your head are all numbered.' Dear, what is less and more contemptible in the whole body of man than a hair or a nail? And these are also numbered, and the Father in heaven takes care of them. In this way we are to act on the examples of the small and bad works of the saints, so that we may be taught and comforted from them." If we are offended and annoyed by the human trifles in Scripture, this is a sure proof either that we do not believe the Incarnation of the Son of God at all, or that this central truth has nevertheless faded into the background of our minds to the point of oblivion. This is the point of Luther's well-known admonishing and warning words:⁸⁴⁹) "I faithfully ask and warn every devout Christian not to be offended by the simple speech and history that he often encounters, but do not doubt how badly it can always be regarded as the vain words, works, judgments and history of the high divine majesty and wisdom. For this is the scripture that makes fools of all the wise and prudent, and stands open only to the small and foolish, as Christ says Matt.

 the highest calling in the kingdom of God is compatible with faithful care for the seemingly most insignificant good, indeed, how the one does not exclude but includes the other."

848) [St. L. II, 470](#).

849) [St. L. XIV, 3. 4](#).

11:25. Therefore let go of your arrogance and feelings and think of this scripture as the highest, noblest sanctuary, as the richest treasure, which can never be completely filled, so that you may find the divine wisdom, which God presents here so foolishly and badly that he dampens all arrogance. Here you will find the swaddling clothes and the manger, where Christ lies, to which the angel also sent the shepherds, Luke 2:11. Poor and insignificant are the swaddling clothes, but dear is the treasure, Christ, which lies within.

In particular, however, solocisms, barbarisms, erroneous sentence constructions and similar things found in the Scriptures are said to make the assumption of the inspiration of the Scriptures impossible. Perhaps Kahn, in his fight against the inspiration of the Scriptures, has compiled most extensively all that which, in his opinion, is against the dignity of the Holy Spirit. He writes:⁸⁵⁰⁾ "Does a doctrine of inspiration which ascribes all the solecisms and barbarisms of the apostolic writings, all the mistaken constructions of Paul... to the Holy Spirit, really think itself worthy of the Holy Spirit?" It is counted as a limitation to the dogmatists that they want to admit Hebraisms but not Solocisms and Barbarisms in the Scriptures.

As far as the solocisms are concerned, the word "solocism" has not always been used in the same sense, as Quenstedt remembers and proves.⁸⁵¹⁾ If one understands by it a "faulty folk dialect" or a deviation from the so-called classical Greek, then the necessary will be said about it immediately with the "barbarisms". But if one understands by "solocism" a violation of the grammatical rules of a language, then with respect to this point Winer says of the New Testament:⁸⁵²⁾ "The New Testament is grammatically, as far as the individual rules of language are concerned, written entirely in Greek." Anyone who examines the New Testament with respect to this point will agree with Winer. But even the wild addresses of "barbarisms" must be denied any reasonable sense.

850) Thus in the first edition of his *Dogmatik*, cited in [Baier-Walther I, 102 f.](#) In the [second edition in a somewhat milder form I, 281. 284 ff. 293 ff.](#)

851) *Systema* I, 119. Interesting data on the use of the word solecism can also be found in *The Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia*, VII, 5755.

852) *Grammar of the New Testament Language Idiom* 6, p. 36.

The New Testament is known to have been written in the so-called κοινή διάλεκτος, that is, in the Greek that had gradually become the general world language and lingua franca since Alexander the Great. Ebeling says of the New Testament writers:⁸⁵³⁾ "They wrote the Hellenistic Greek which in their day was common vernacular throughout the Roman Empire." And shortly before, Ebeling notes "that the vocabulary and usage of the New Testament does not stand alone in any way, but belongs to and is found especially in letters, reports, petitions, bills, contracts, wills, and the like, that is, in the language of everyday intercourse and of the people." Robertson: "It is not speculation to speak of the κοινή as a *world-speech*, for the inscriptions in the κοινή testify to its spread over Asia, Egypt, Greece, Italy, Sicily, and the isles of the sea. ... The κοινή was in such general use that the Roman Senate and imperial governors had the decrees translated into the world-language and scattered over the empire. It is significant that the Greek speech becomes one instead of many dialects at the very time that the Roman rule sweeps over the world."⁸⁵⁴⁾ Thus the reason is obvious why the sacred writers wrote in the κοινή διάλεκτος that is, in the world-language or common vernacular, and according to the intention of the Holy Spirit who was in them, should write⁸⁵⁵⁾. After all, they had a calling to the world.⁸⁵⁶⁾ Therefore, as in their oral proclamation, so also in their writings, they wanted and should be understood not only by a part of the people, such as the classically educated part, but by the whole people. After all, it was about the salvation of the whole people and the whole human world.⁸⁵⁷⁾ How excellently the holy apostles

853) *Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* 1913, Vorrede III.

854) p. 54. About the expression "Hellenistic" Greek Winer, p. 26 f.; Blaß-Debrumer, *Neutest. Gr.* 5, p. 1.

855) 1 Petr. 1:12; 1 Cor. 2:15; 2 Cor. 13:3.

856) Matt. 28:18-20; Mark. 16:15. 16; Luke 24:46. 47.

857) Dr. A. L. Gräbner calls (*Theol. Quarterly*, 1897, p. 146) the New Testament Greek "a type of Greek" "which rendered the New Testament highly adapted to its intended use for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness, not to men of polite education only, but to the *people at large*, to entire congregations of hearers to whom these books were to be read and interpreted, and who should themselves be readers searching the Scriptures of the New Testament as well as of the Old."

achieved their purpose of being generally understood by using the common vernacular and lingua franca is evident from the fact that they did not consider it necessary to send a commentary with their letters. We can clearly see that the apostolic letters were understood not only by the teachers of the congregations, but by the congregations themselves, i.e., by the "people", and that was the case when the letters were simply read aloud. Paul writes to the Christians at Colosse (4:16): "When the epistle is read among you, cause it to be read also in the congregation at Laodicea, and that ye read those of Laodicea," and to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 5:27): "I adjure you by the Lord, that ye cause this epistle to be read to all the holy brethren." But even apart from the purpose that the apostles wanted and should be understood by everyone, especially in their epistles, it reveals a great lack of understanding to call deviations from "classical Greek" barbarisms. The lack of understanding is so great that one is almost unwilling to even consider it. The charge of barbarisms on account of deviations from classical Greek is based on the nonsensical thought, contrary even to all natural reason, as if it had been more decent for the Holy Spirit to speak like Demosthenes or Plato instead of using the language of the people. Rightly, after all, it is true also in regard to language: "Before God nothing is small, because before him nothing is great." And therefore the dogmatists are right when they state as a principle that all judgments of the Greek of the New Testament which express censure are unseemly and should not be found among Christians.⁸⁵⁸⁾ The Greek language as it is before us in the New Testament, and of course the Hebrew language of the Old Testament, are sacred languages, above all languages that exist elsewhere in the world. Even Cremer says⁸⁵⁹⁾ of the Greek of the New Testament that it became the "organ of the Spirit of Christ," though this does not quite fit the position Cremer otherwise takes on the inspiration of Scripture. Even Rothe says:⁸⁶⁰⁾ "Indeed, it is fair to speak of a language of the Holy Spirit." We should never forget:

858) Quenstedt 1, 118 sq. under *status controversiae*.

859) *Dictionary of the Newest. Greek* 3 Preface V.

860) Quoted by Cremer, op. cit., Preface VI, from Rothes Schrift "Zur Dogmatik", Gotha 1863, p. 238.

The Greek language of the New Testament is precisely the Greek in which God speaks to the world until the Last Day and to which God binds all the world until the Last Day, because it is God's original text, according to which all translations must also be guided. Thus, however, every rebuke of New Testament Greek is offensive and annoying, because every rebuke includes in itself a rebuke of God. This is why, as has already been noted, dogmatists are rightly so sensitive when solocisms and barbarisms are addressed in the New Testament, because these expressions were used in an evil sense in their time, as they are in ours.⁸⁶¹⁾ As offensive and annoying as it would be to call the Son of God a "barbarian" because, when the time was fulfilled, He took to Himself a human nature from the Virgin Mary, so offensive and annoying is it to speak of "barbarisms" in relation to the Word of God, that is, in relation to the Holy Scriptures, because this Word appeared in the form of this Greek language, which in the fullness of time was the general vernacular and lingua franca.⁸⁶²⁾

861) Quenstedt 1, 119 under ῥῆσις: *Stylus Novi Testamenti ab omni barbarismorum et soloecismorum labe immunis est.* Robertson reports 3:p. 50: "Deissmann strongly disapproves the term 'vulgar Greek,' 'bad Greek,' 'Graecitas fatiscens' in contrast with 'classic Greek.'" The criticized expressions are not merely unseemly from the point of view of linguistic history, but are above all annoying from the Christian point of view, because Christians know that the New Testament Greek is "Christ's organ." But it should be noted that the expression "vulgar Greek", "vulgar language", is not always used in the present day in a censuring sense, but also as a synonym of "vernacular".

862) In this context, we would like to remind you of a caution that is appropriate when comparing the New Testament Greek with the so-called classical Greek. Those who know the Greek of the New Testament by vocabulary and diction will find any correspondence between New Testament and classical Greek interesting. But it is going too far if we speak of this correspondence as if we would or could thereby give more prestige and dignity to the language of the New Testament. This is basically giving away the right standard of judgment. The unique prestige and dignity of New Testament Greek consists in the fact that it is the "Greek organ of the Spirit of Christ," as Cremer puts it. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that in such words as ἀλήθεια, εὐαγγέλιον, χάρις, πίσις, etc., we have only a consonance in words, since the peculiarly Christian meaning of these words was entirely unknown to all the writers of classical Greek (1 Cor. 2:9). The same is true, of course, of such expressions as ἄγιος, δίκαιος, etc., applied to life, because everything that non-Christians understand by them is situated outside Christianity.

As for the so-called "Hebraisms" ("the Jewish coloring" of the New Testament Greek), if they are really present,⁸⁶³⁾ they rightly belong in the New Testament Greek, because the New Testament does not bring a new religion, but is only the fulfillment of the Old Testament. Dr. A. L. Gräbner writes:⁸⁶⁴⁾ "The Greek of the New Testament was to bear the stamp and imprint of the country where Jesus lived and died, and of that Church and people of which New Testament Christianity is, not in form, but as to its spiritual nature, the true continuation, its adherents living by the same faith in the same Savior as Abraham, their father according to the faith." The dogmatists also point to this, stating that Hebraisms in the New Testament are natural and quite all right because of the connection with the Old, while they reject solecisms and barbarisms as including a rebuke of God.⁸⁶⁵⁾

With the "missed constructions of the apostle Paul", which according to Kahn's opinion contradict the dignity of the Holy Spirit, is probably primarily thought of so-called anakolutha. By anakolutha we usually understand such irregular sentence formations in which the construction begun is not carried out because the speaker or writer is distracted from the construction begun by inflowing thoughts. Winer says in regard to the genesis of aborted sentence formation:⁸⁶⁶⁾ "In lively minds occupied with thought more than with linguistic expression, anakoluths are also most frequently to be expected." In popular parlance, we call this "falling out of construction." The judicious speaker or writer involuntarily or intentionally falls out of construction when he feels or realizes that this serves the clarity of exposition or the emphasis of particular terms. We therefore find anakolutha

863) Their number has been exaggerated. Cf. Winer, Gr. 6, p. 26 ff, § 3: "Hebrew-Aramaic Coloring of Old Testament Diction."

864) Theological Quarterly, [p. 22](#).

865) Quenstedt I, 119: *Aliud est εβραΐζειν, aliud βαρβαρίζειν. Illud de Novo Testamento affirmamus, hoc negamus. ... Placuit namque Deo connectere utrumque foedus atque in Vetere et Novo Testamento vere admirandam minimeque fortuitam, tam in rebus quam in verbis et phrasibus, servare conformitatem. ... Barbarum Scripturae Sacrae contemtorem esse oportet, qui ipsam barbarismorum accusare audeat.* [[Google](#)]

866) Gr. 6, p. 500.

precisely also in the Greek and Latin writers from the classical period, and old and new grammarians have quite a lot of kind and praiseworthy things to say about anacolutha. They do not mark them as errors, but point out their psychological origin and then also their usefulness, because they enter into the service of the clear representation and the emphasis of important thoughts. Since the Holy Spirit is also a spirit of clarity of presentation and emphasis of particularly important thoughts, he did not consider it a detriment to his dignity to make use of anacolutha in particular, as he does of human language in general.⁸⁶⁷⁾ What the grammarians have to say about the explanation and praise of interrupted sentence construction can be read in the major grammars of older and newer times. We would like to put here what the old Matthiae says about "deviations from the regular construction" in his "Ausführliche Griechische Grammatik", p. 1296. It says there: "The best Greek writers very often abandon the logically correct order or relationship of the words of a sentence,

 867) Examples in Winer, p. 500 ff. Gal. 2:6 we have, as is also evident in Luther's translation, an anacoluthic structure. From the beginning of the sentence ἀπό δε των δοκονντων εἶναι τι should follow, in regular structure, a conclusion in passive turn, such as: οὐδεν ἐδιδάχ&ην. (Winer.) But prompted by the intervening phrase φηήφρηταβ ὁποῖοι ποτε ἦσαν etc., a conclusion in active (medial) turn follows. Robertson, p. 438: "One of the most striking anacolutha in Paul's epistles is found at the end of Rom. 5:12, where the apodosis to the ὥστερ clause is wanting. The next sentence (ἀχρι γάρ) takes up the subordinate clause εψ ω πάντες ἡμαρτον, and the comparison is never completed. In verse 18 a new comparison is drawn in complete form." The more recent New Testament linguists, such as Winer, Robertson, Blaß (Blaß-Debrunner, Gr. 5, 1921, pp. 269 ff.), not infrequently diverge widely in their explanation of the anacolutha where they occur in the New Testament. There is no harm in this, because the attentive reader of the Bible understands the passages in question very well without the anacolutha being explained to him. Gal. 2:6, for example, is understood by every Bible reader without dissection of the structure. While Winer, Robertson, Buttman et al. speak matter-of-factly about irregular constructions, it is unfortunately different with Blaß-Debrunner. Cf. e.g. E. g., p. 271: "Into a pure whirlwind runs the construction of 1 Tim. 1:3 ff. as a result of the incessant interpolations and appendages." The "Wirrsal" has its seat elsewhere than in Pauli's words. In spite of the anacolutha, each thought clearly follows the other in the whole mighty passage until the apostle concludes v. 17. Buttman (Gr., p. 331) rightly counts the passage 1 Tim. 1:3 ff. among the passages in which "due to the richness of thought and fullness of heart" the structure that was started is left behind.

or even the order or relationship otherwise established by the use of language, in order either to promote the emphasis placed on one or more words, or to promote clarity, or even to give the address the unforced lightness of conversational tone and thereby grace. The classical Attic writers never do this without one of these considerations; the later orators seek an elegance in it, which, however, is lost by the very fact that it is sought. Such deviations from the regular construction are called anacolutha, that is, constructions in which a sentence concludes differently than the beginning of it led one to expect or required, or when that does not follow (ἀκολονῶεω with the *ἀ priv.*) what should follow after the construction begun. Such deviations from the grammatically or logically correct construction are not based on an oversight, but on the intention of the writer and always have an occasion." ⁸⁶⁸⁾

Some scriptures have been pointed out as allegedly contradicting inspiration. For example, 1 Cor. 7:10, 12:25, where Paul explicitly says that not everything he writes is the Lord's command. While v. 10 says: "I do not command the married, but the Lord," he adds v. 12: "But I say to the others, not the Lord," and v. 26: "Of virgins I have no commandment of the Lord." To refute this objection, it is sufficient to note what Luther says about the passage:⁸⁶⁹⁾ "Because St. Paul here testifies that this address is not the Lord's, but his, he gives to understand that it is not commanded by God, but is free to do otherwise or so. For he distinguishes his words from the word of the Lord, that the Lord's word should be commandment, but his word should be counsel." In still other words, we are dealing here with an inspired counsel of the apostle. The apostle does not distinguish here between inspired and non-inspired parts of his writing, but he indicates what in what he has written from inspiration

868) *Ausführl. griech. Gr.* 2, Leipzig 1825. Also Alex. Buttmann, in his newest. Gr., which follows Ph. Buttmann's Griech. Gr., deals more extensively with the anacoluth, p. 324 ff. Very extensively treats this subject, following in part Winer, Robertson, *Grammars* 3, p. 435 ff. N. T., p. 435 ff: "The very jolt that is given by the anacoluthon is often successful in making more emphasis. The attention is drawn anew to the sentence to see what is the matter.

869) St. L. VIII, 1058; Walch VIII, 1109.

is God's command binding the consciences and what is only his, the apostle's, Christian counsel releasing the consciences. Luther's distinction between commandment and counsel in this passage must be strictly adhered to. Otherwise there is a misunderstanding of the passage that can embarrass the unwary. Philippi first says quite correctly that the apostle distinguishes between an "unconditional commandment of the Lord concerning a moral *necessarium* and free counsel on his part concerning a moral *ἀδιάφορον*." But when Philippi adds that δοκῶ δε κάγώ etc. (v. 40: "But I hold, I also have the Spirit of God") "in the mouth of an apostle does not factually admit of contradiction," this is a misunderstanding that would put the apostle in contradiction with himself. Paul not only allows contradiction to arise against his "free counsel," but repeatedly and explicitly says that anyone to whom his counsel does not seem appropriate is free to follow it or not. — Also the objection raised from 1 Cor. 1:16 against inspiration is based on a confusion of two things that have nothing to do with each other. It has been said that because the apostle admits the possibility of an error of memory regarding the number of those he personally baptized, his letters could not possibly have been written by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, because errors of memory are impossible with the Holy Spirit. This objection has been answered briefly and accurately: Just as inspiration did not make the holy writers personally sinless in their lives, neither did it make them infallible or omniscient with respect to the events of their lives. — The short private letter to Philemon has also been brought into the field against inspiration, because this letter was written in such a tender and polite tone. "Shall we think," opined Kahnis, "that the Apostle Paul, when he wrote that tender, urbane letter to Philemon, touched with a quiet humor [!], was only recording what the Holy Spirit dictated to him?"⁸⁷⁰) However, this can be imagined, considering that it is the Holy Spirit's way to teach Christians delicate, lovely, polite, melodious address. Col. 4:6: "Let your address always be sweet" (εν χάριτι). Phil. 4:8: "What is lovely, what is well spoken (προσφιλὴ — εὐφημα), — is about a virtue, is about a praise, pursue it." Kahnis finds the quiet "humor", allegedly indecent to the Holy Spirit, mainly

870) Quote from Baier-Walther [1](#), [102](#).

in the words v. 18-20, where Paul asks Philemon to transfer to his, Paul's, account the debt that the runaway slave, then converted to Christ by Paul, owes to his master. The apostle, however, makes use here of a manner of speaking reminiscent of a transaction in business: "I, Paul, have written it with my hand, I will pay it" (ἐγὼ ἀποτίσω). It sounds business-like, like our: I promise to pay. But Christians should not be totally unfamiliar with this "business," and they should not be offended by it. The ἐγὼ ἀποτίσω, after all, is just the general Christian commandment of love translated into concrete: "Bear one another's burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ."⁸⁷¹⁾ And this commandment of love, with which Christians love one another, flows from the love which Christ showed us when he had the guilt of the whole world of sin transferred to his account, as Paul binds together both kinds of love, which intercedes for the other, in the words, "Walk in love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a gift and sacrifice, a sweet savor to God."⁸⁷²⁾ If we were to call what Paul says in the letter to Philemon about the transfer of guilt a "humor" not decent to the Holy Spirit, we would be revealing that our judgment does not come from the knowledge that is of God. The ancient church, therefore, also gave the Epistle to Philemon a place in the canon without hesitation or contradiction.⁸⁷³⁾ Luther judges⁸⁷⁴⁾ in his preface to the Epistle to Philemon: "This epistle shows a masterly, lovely example of Christian love. For there we see how St. Paul takes care of poor Onesimi and represents him against his Lord with all that he is able, and does not present himself otherwise than as if he himself were Onesimus who had sinned. But he does not do this with power or force, as he would be right, but expresses himself according to his right, so that he forces Philemon to forgive himself according to his right. Just as Christ did for us against God the Father, so St. Paul does for Onesimus against Philemon. For Christ also hath declared himself right, and with love and humility hath overcome the Father, that he should take his wrath and justice,

871) Gal. 6:2. 872) Eph. 5:2.

873) Cf. [Fürbringer, Einleitung in das N. T., p. 71.](#)

874) [St. L. XIV, 122.](#)

and receive us into favor for Christ's sake, who therefore earnestly represents us, and so cordially takes care of us."

Among the objections to inspiration is finally also the reference to evil consequences which are supposedly inseparably bound up with the "old doctrine of inspiration". Modern theology, even the "positive" one, sees, as we have had to point out repeatedly, in the identification of Scripture and Word of God an "evil inheritance" left to us by the first Church, the Church of the Reformation, and especially by the dogmatists. "Intellectualism," a mere intellectual Christianity, was the natural consequence of verbal inspiration or the equating of Scripture and the Word of God.⁸⁷⁶⁾ This alleged evil consequence has already been dealt with. We still point out here two allegedly evil consequences which Prof. Zöckler of Greifswald particularly emphasized on the occasion of Kiers' trade and objected to "a return to the Scriptural judgment and treatment of the 17th century". These evil consequences would be the downfall of "theological science" and the transformation of the state churches into free churches. Pastor Schulze-Walsleben had declared in a lecture at the "August Conference" (1891), among other things: "We find no reason to abandon the position on Scripture which the church has taken toward it from the beginning, and we continue to declare that as its glory, that through it God speaks to men, and that it is His infallible Word." Prof. Zöckler, on the other hand, wrote at some length in the *Evangelischen Kirchenzeitung*, of which he was then editor, and concluded his exposition with the words: "One would not think to be able to draw theological carriers, skillful for the execution of a possible repristination plan of that kind, from the teaching institutions of our state churches or to

875) At best, one can speak here, Philemon v. 18-20, with several expositions of a "joke" on the part of the apostle. But it is a "fine, spiritual" joke. Vilmar, for example, writes in his Explanation of the New Testament II, 427: "Finally, the apostle jokes in a fine way, in that he would like to have the damage done to Philemon by the escape of Onesimus put on his account; he himself, as he wrote to him, also wants to settle with him in his own person, whereby he does not even want to take into account that Philemon himself is indebted to him [the apostle, through whom he had been converted]." Cf. in Calov, *Biblia Illustrata* z. St., the testimonies from the church fathers about the fine spiritual tone of the letter to Philemon.

876) Cf. pp. 70-73.

keep in touch with state-church theological science at all, if one seriously took the path leading back to Lutheran scholasticism and its absolute concept of theopneusty. The full consequence of the absolute verbal inspiration faith is free churchism. Go over to that position which is currently being cultivated in the American West⁸⁷⁷⁾ — and the departure from our national and people's churches would soon enough be unavoidable." What is said here about the danger for "theological science" is not as meaningless as it sounds at first. We have only to realize what Zöckler, along with the whole of modern theology, understands by theological science. He understands by it the theological science which no longer knows that the word of the prophets and apostles is Christ's word, and which has therefore made a change of basis. It wants to draw and standardize Christian doctrines not from Christ's Word, the Holy Scriptures, but from within the theologizing subject.⁸⁷⁸⁾ This theological science, however, is not compatible with a γράφῃ to which the predicate θεόπνευστος belongs. The Holy Scriptures, which by inspiration are God's infallible Word, harshly condemns every theological science that has engaged in the lose-the-Scriptures movement. It says, "If any man abide not in the saving words of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . he is darkened, and knoweth nothing."⁸⁷⁹⁾ It is like the idol Dagon, when the ark of the covenant of Israel was placed next to him, to the theological science, which has transferred its basis from the Holy Scriptures to the "storm-free castle" of the theologizing subject:⁸⁸⁰⁾ "When those of Ashdod rose early on the morrow, they found Dagon lying on his face on the ground before the ark of the Lord. But they took Dagon and put him back in his place. And when they arose early on the morrow, they found Dagon again lying on his face on the ground before the ark of the Lord, but his head and both his hands cut off

877) The "Missourians" are meant.

878) How emphatically Zöckler denies the inspiration of Scripture and therefore also questions the "judicial authority", the "perspicuity" and the "sufficiency" of Scripture is evident from his explanations in his "Handbuch der theol. Wissenschaften" 2 III, 148-151.

879) 1 Tim. 6:3. 4. 880) 1 Sam. 5:2 ff.

on the threshold, and the stump alone lying thereon." It is easy to understand that the people of Ashdod, in the instinct of self-preservation, said, "Let not the ark of the God of Israel remain with us; for his hand is too hard upon us and upon Dagon our god." So it is also easy to understand that the modern theologians, out of self-preservation instinct, are anxious not to let the Scriptures remain in the church as God's infallible Word, because a Scripture so constituted is too hard upon them and their "theological science." But it is better for the church to let the word of the apostles and prophets remain with her, because it is her foundation (θεμέλιος) on which she stands, and on the other hand to give the modern theology with its "theological science" the farewell, because this "science", because of its detachment from the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ, is based on imagination and ignorance (τεύφωται, μηδὲν επιστάμενος). — Nor is the fear that "the full consequence of the absolute concept of theopneusty" would lead to free-churchism unfounded. For the inspired Scripture teaches a twofold thing, which is here under consideration: 1. That the "free church," that is, the church independent of the state, is divine order;⁸⁸¹⁾ 2. That Christians are commanded by God to depart from all teachers who cause division and offence apart from the doctrine which Christians have learned from the apostles, or, which is the same thing, from Christ.⁸⁸²⁾ But that the state churches were and still are full of such ἐτεροδιδασκαλοῦντες⁸⁸³⁾ [heterodoxy] is generally admitted. The same, of course, still applies at the present time in the same measure to the "Landes-Volkskirchen," which one strives to preserve where the separation of church and state has already been officially pronounced. "The full consequence of the absolute verbal inspiration faith" — and that is the right faith — drives Christians in all places and at all times to hold fast to the unadulterated doctrine of Christ, as it is clearly and inerrantly expressed in the inspired Holy Scriptures, even in the case of a free church constitution, and to deny the fellowship of the church to the error.

881) Luke 22:25, 26: "The worldly kings rule. ... But ye do not so." Matt. 23:8: "One is your Master, Christ." Jn. 18:36: "My kingdom is not of this world."

882) Rom. 16:17; 2 John 9-11. 883) 1 Tim. 1:3; 6:3.

6. The history of the doctrine of inspiration. [^]

That Christ and the apostles taught the verbal inspiration of both the Old Testament and New Testament Scriptures had to be stated many times in defining the concept of Christian theology and then demonstrated in more detail under the sections "The Holy Scriptures, as distinguished from all other writings, are the Word of God" and "The Holy Scriptures are God's Word because they are given, or inspired, by God."⁸⁸⁴ Even Rothe, who is widely regarded as a leader in the field of the right modern view of Scripture,⁸⁸⁵ admits that the apostles identified Scripture and the Word of God, though he stands sufficiently to the left to openly confess that the apostle's judgment is not authoritative for him."⁸⁸⁶ When Hofmann — following Schleiermacher's processes — claims,⁸⁸⁷ that Christ and the apostles do not refer to "individual sayings" and "individual words," but always to "the whole of Scripture" or the "unified whole of Scripture," i.e., that they do not teach verbal inspiration either, Kliefoth rightly called this, as has already been reminded, an "incomprehensible phrase."⁸⁸⁸ Hofmann's assertion belongs to the class of assertions that astound by their boldness, because every reader of the Gospels and the letters of the Apostles knows that the opposite is the case.⁸⁸⁹ — That the Church Fathers taught verbal inspiration is so evident that Cremer

884) pp. 256 ff. 262 ff. 885) Nitzsche-Stephan, pp. 255 ff.

886) Cf. Philippi, Glaubenslehre 3, p. 299: "The fact that the apostles regard the entire Old Testament Scriptures as the Word of God inspired by the Holy Spirit, God Himself therefore as *auctor primarius Scripturae Sacrae*, is indeed so irrefutable that even Rothe, p. 180 ff. (in his writing "Zur Dogmatik", 1863), does not deny it, and even admits that our church-dogmatic doctrine of inspiration can invoke the authority of the apostles. Nevertheless, he does not want to be bound to the doctrine of the origin and nature of the Old Testament any more than to the doctrines of the apostles in general." Meusel III, 459 also refers to Rothe's concession: "Rothe acknowledges that the entire exegesis and hermeneutics of the New Testament in relation to the Old rests on such a view of inspiration. For this reason, his exegetical conscience refuses to bind him to the doctrine of the apostles on this point, and he contrasts it with another theory of inspiration. For us, the testimony of Scripture is more important.

887) Schriftbeweis 2 I, 671 ff.

888) Cf. the more detailed explanation on pp. 243 f.

889) Matt. 4:4. 7. 10; Jn. 10:35 etc. — Rom. 4:3. 6- 7; Gal. 3:16 etc.


accuses them of having "the doctrine of inspiration of the older Protestant dogmatics".⁸⁹⁰⁾ Of more recent theologians, Rudelbach gives the same proof with respect to the Church Fathers, admittedly not blaming, but approving and praising.⁸⁹¹⁾ — As for Luther and the dogmatists, modern theology generally admits and regrets that they "identified" Scripture and the Word of God, thus taking over an evil inheritance from the early church and unfortunately passing it on to the detriment of the church.⁸⁹²⁾ In order to gain at least a *particeps criminis in nuce* in the Reformer of the church, most of the newer theologians claim that here and there an approach to a "more liberal view of Scripture" can be found in Luther.⁸⁹³⁾ This assertion contradicts historical truth, as will be shown in the following section. — That in the symbols of the Lutheran church the verbal inspiration is presupposed as an undoubtedly fixed doctrine, because in it the word of Scripture and the word of the Holy Spirit are used as synonymous expressions,⁸⁹⁴⁾

890) RE.² VI. 751.

891) *Zeitschrift für d. luth. Theol. u. Kirche*, 1840, 1. issue, p. 18 f. Also in Baier's *Compendium Theologiae Historicae* (published after his death by his son, 1690) is the proof by sufficient quotations that the church fathers teach the verbal inspiration. Quenstedt on Augustine's doctrine of Scripture, *Systema* I, 116. Cf. in Chemnitz' *Examen* the long section: *Testimonia veteris ecclesiae de Scriptura*, Geneva ed. 1667, p. 39 sqq. Before that Chemnitz takes what the doctrines of Scripture teach about themselves. From this exposition Chemnitz' position on Scripture is clearly discerned. Chemnitz says about the proof from the Scripture for the Scripture a. a. O.: *Quae hactenus ex ipsis Scripturae verbis adduximus, firmissima sunt testimonia, quibus pia mens tuto niti potest. Proponunt enim nobis ipsius Spiritus Sancti iudicium de Scriptura. Sicut enim veteres dicunt, de Deo nihil credendum esse, nisi ipso Deo revelante et testificante, ita etiam de Scriptura id credamus, quod ipsa Scriptura de se, imo quod ipse Spiritus Sanctus de opere suo iudicat et pronunciat.* [[Google](#)] Chemnitz thus does not speak "reservedly" about the inspiration of Scripture, as has been asserted here and there by more recent theologians.

892) Ihmels, [Zentralfragen 2](#), p. 56 ff.

893) So also R. Seeberg, [Dogmengesch. II](#), 285 ff.

894) Augsb. Confession, M. 66, 49 [[Trigl. 91, 49](#) Cur toties prohibet Scriptura condere et audire traditiones? Cur vocat eas doctrinas daemoniorum (1 Tim. 4:1)? Num frustra haec praemonuit Spiritus Sanctus? The Apology, 107, 108: *Num frustra existimant toties idem repeti? Num arbitrantur, excidisse Spiritui Sancto non animadvertenti has voces?* Same, 74, 9: *Habes igitur, lector,*

is also generally conceded in the present. If the deniers of inspiration who call themselves Lutheran find comfort in the fact that in the Lutheran symbols the verbal inspiration is presupposed as a fixed truth, but is not taught in a special article, it is neither logically nor psychologically recognizable how this can be a comfort for them. That among the Lutheran theologians of the seventeenth century Georg Calixt († 1656) abandoned the scriptural doctrine of inspiration cannot be denied, because he restricted inspiration to the main matters and to those things previously unknown to the sacred writers, but in secondary matters and in those things previously known to the writers he assumed only a preservation from error.⁸⁹⁵⁾ It must also be admitted that Johann Musaeus († 1681) occasionally expressed that the verbal inspiration was a hypothesis not yet sufficiently proven. Musaeus took this back with the explanation that those words were not written from his own sense, but from the sense of the opponent.⁸⁹⁶⁾ Rationalism, which began with power after the middle of the 18th century, gave up with the Christian doctrine in general, namely with the *satisfactio Christi vicaria*, also the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.⁸⁹⁷⁾ The denial of the *satisfactio vicaria* gives up the *differentia specifica* of Christianity and puts the Christian religion in a class with the pagan doctrine of works. What then is the use of a Holy Scripture inspired by God?

nunc apologiam nostram, ex qua intelliges, et quid adversarii iudicaverint (retulimus enim bona fide), et quod articulos aliquot contra manifestam Scripturam Spiritus Sancti damnaverint.

895) Quenstedt I, 100.

896) Quenstedt reports I, 106: *Vide disquisitionem Musaei de stylo Novi Testamenti observationibus Apologeticis M. Iac. Grossii oppositam anno 1641, in qua § 16 ait: Ad argumentum Grossii ab adversario responderi posse, quod nitatur hypothese nondum concessa nec satis probata, scii. Spiritum Sanctum apostolis non solum res, sed ipsa etiam verba inspirasse. Item § 39: Sermonem apostolorum non esse sermonem Dei quoad materiale seu ipsa verba, sed quantum ad formale, scii, id, quod per sermonem revelatur. Conf. of the Jena theologians detailed explanation Loc. 1, De Scriptura Sacra, p. 31 sq., ubi idem D. Musaeus monet, se hoc non ex sua, sed ex antagonistae personam gerentis mente dixisse. [Google] On Musaeus cf. Philippi, Glaubenslehre. 3 I, 252.*

897) Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 33 ff. 556. on Töllner also RE.² XV, 711 ff. Töllner argues in such a way that he rejects not merely the *obedientia activa*, but the vicarious satisfaction of Christ in general.

The theological activity of the rationalists is to prove that the Scripture interpreted rightly, that is, according to reason, is nothing more than a sublime moral doctrine exemplified by Jesus of Nazareth. — "The reformer of the church of the nineteenth century," Schleiermacher († 1834), did not, like the Reformer of the sixteenth century, lead theology back to Scripture, but led it into the mire of emotional rationalism. The source and decisive norm of theology should not be Scripture, but the pious self-consciousness of the theologizing subject, the Christian experience, etc. According to the "Schleiermacher" method, albeit with deviations with respect to the content of "pious self-consciousness," truly and admittedly the entire modern theology, liberal and positive, conducts its theological activity. Because it has not returned to the scriptural doctrine of Christ's vicarious satisfaction, it stands thereby outside the sphere from which Christ's Word, which we have in the writings of the apostles and prophets, is recognized as Christ's or God's Word. Whoever does not believe Christ and His apostles in what they teach about the reconciliation of the world through the substitutionary satisfaction of Christ, will consequently also not believe Christ and the apostles in what they say about the Holy Scriptures. He who, rejecting the divine thoughts, makes his own thoughts about God's reconciliation of the world of sin, will consequently also make his own thoughts about God's Word, the Holy Scriptures, even with explicit rejection of the divine judgment on the Scriptures.⁸⁹⁸⁾ We can

 898) This point was also recalled in L. u. W. (1893, p. 163 f.) on the occasion of the Briggs trial: "If someone denies the inspiration of the Scriptures as decisively as D. Briggs, one has every reason to ask whether Briggs still believes anything at all of the Christian doctrine. By Christian doctrine, of course, we do not mean the law — for parts of the law are still in all pagan religions — but the gospel, that is, the doctrine that a man is saved by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith and not by his own works. If a person really believes this gospel, believes that God has saved men from eternal damnation through His Son's vicarious suffering and death, then he has little desire to doubt that God has also done this to men, giving them the Holy Scriptures as His infallible Word. Those who believe the doctrine of justification may well be temporarily challenged with doubts concerning the divinity of Scripture, but that they can persist

describe the position of modern theology towards Scripture in summary thus: Modern theologians do not want to believe Scripture for what it says about itself, but they want to determine *a posteriori*, by way of human investigation and criticism, the character of Scripture.⁸⁹⁹ In this *modus procedendi* they come to the conclusion that Scripture is not God's infallible Word, but a historical account, more or less influenced by the Holy Spirit, of God's revelation in the Word (revelatory document). In this historical report, because it comes partly from the Holy Spirit, partly from men (the "early church", primitive church) (therefore: "God-human" report), errors are naturally not excluded. Therefore it is the task of modern theology, which to a high degree has a sense for "reality", to criticize the Scriptures according to content and wording, even if it

 in denying the same and yet hold fast the Christian doctrine of the forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ's merit is difficult to suppose. [Dr. Briggs](#) has — according to his clear explanation — thrown the Christian faith overboard. ... He states this clearly in the more detailed exposition of the 'progressive sanctification' he adopts. He justifies his doctrine that the 'sanctification' of the soul must continue to develop after death by saying that one cannot possibly suppose that 'father and child, mother and infant, the teacher and the pupil, the self-sacrificing missionary and the new convert, the zealous evangelist and the thief and murderer who still turns to Christ from the gallows in his last hour, — that these should all be treated alike'. Underlying this argument is the denial of Christianity, namely, the denial of the doctrine: 'For there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:.' Dr. Briggs does not want the thief on the cross to go to paradise at the same time and immediately as the 'zealous evangelist', but still wants him to go through 'progressive sanctification', because he does not believe at all that the forgiveness of sins is for Christ's merit alone, and therefore, if the believer believes and as soon as he believes, all iniquities are blotted out like a cloud and his sins like a mist. Briggs has thus apostasized from the Christian faith in the center. That now also the scriptural passages, which testify that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God, no longer make any impression on him, need not surprise us. He would have fallen away from the Christian faith in his doctrine of the way of salvation, if he still outwardly let the Scriptures stand as the Word of God."

899) [Hastings](#) VII, 346 gives an accurate description of this *a posteriori* method of modern theology.

has not yet succeeded in determining the boundaries between truth and error. In the main thing they agree, namely, that the Scriptures are not to be regarded as God's infallible Word, and that the Scriptures, regarded as the infallible Word of God, cannot produce "life-warming" Christianity; rather, with the old conception of the Scriptures, "intellectualism" is the natural consequence. If the newer theologians still speak of "inspiration", they do not understand by it the unique divine action by which God gave His Word of God to the holy writers so that it would be the foundation of faith for His Church until the Last Day (Eph. 2:20; Jn. 17:20), but they understand by "inspiration" only a spiritual enlightenment, even if increased, which is given to all Christians. Just as the enlightenment that belongs to all Christians does not include complete freedom from error, the increased enlightenment of the holy writers does not make them free from error. It is also a characteristic of modern theology that the majority of its representatives claim that it is "evident" to assume degrees in the inspiration of the Scriptures. But this assumption of degrees in inspiration has no more sense than the assumption of degrees in the Godhead. When Subordinatians call the Son of God God "in the second sense of the word", they thereby abolish the concept of God, and when newer theologians address degrees of inspiration, they thereby abandon the scriptural concept of inspiration. Kahnis binds the two together: degrees in the Godhead and degrees in the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. He assumes three degrees of inspiration, even if he confesses not to be completely sure about it. He writes (quoted in [Baier-Walther, p. 103](#)): "Among these prophetic and apostolic writings there are differences both from the standpoint of origin and content. We cannot equate Deuteronomy with the first four books. Among the prophets, Obadiah and Jonah stand below Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel. In the New Testament, the Pastoral Epistles and the Epistle to Philemon enter a second line. The word of the revelation, which goes out within the kingdom of the Old and New Covenant, is to be understood only in the context of the history of the same. And so the history books of Old and New Covenant enter into their canonical right, but a right of second degree. As the content of the same is the interaction of the divine and the human in the kingdom of God, so also the sacred

historians are not necessarily men of revelation, but men who stand in the spirit of the kingdom of God. In the Old Testament the prophetic history books belong to this in the first line, the hagiographic Ruth, Ezra, Nehemiah in the second, the books Esther and Chronicles in the third. In the New Testament, the first three Gospels fall into this second class in the first place, the Acts of the Apostles in the second. A third class is formed by the Old and New Testament hagiographers, whose content is neither revelation nor history of the kingdom, but life in the kingdom of God as it is presented in detail. In the Old Testament, the Psalms belong to the first class, in the second class the Proverbs of Solomon, Job and Lamentations of Jeremiah, in the third class the Song of Songs, Koheleth and Daniel, in the New Testament primarily the Epistle to the Hebrews and the 2nd and 3rd Epistles of John, which in all probability are not certainly of Johannine origin and moreover have a more personal content, in the second class the other Catholic Epistles and the Apocalypse. If personality is of essential importance in the first class, it is of secondary importance in the second, since here everything depends on objective truth and the spirit of presentation. But it is in the nature of the third class that the subject becomes important. It is not indifferent whether a psalm is by David or not, the passages are by Solomon or alter, Daniel genuine or spurious, etc. But one must be careful with these writings of the third rank to want to put too much on authenticity. May this attempt, from the standpoint of inspiration, to divide the Scriptures into three classes be defective, at any rate a distinction of degrees of inspiration is in the spirit of Scripture, as then it has significant authorities for itself in ancient and modern times." As is well known, this distinction is not in the sense of Scripture. It is said in Scripture 2 Tim. 3:16: *πάσα γραφή θεόπνευστος* ["all scripture is inspired"] by which all the writings of the Old Testament (*τά Ιερὰ γράμματα*, v. 15) are indiscriminately placed in one class. Christ quotes Jn. 10:34 from the Psalms, Ps. 82:6: "Ye are gods," but does not add that it is only a Scriptural word "of the third class," as Kahnis thinks, but says: "The Scripture cannot be broken." The whole distinction of degrees in inspiration is a human invention, the sole purpose of which is to free the human theologizing subject from the burdensome fetter of the divine authority of Scripture.

Thus, it is unfortunately correct when [Nitzsch-Stephan \(p. 258\)](#) says about "the present situation": "In the present, the orthodox doctrine of inspiration has hardly any dogmatic significance. But it is still asserted by individuals, such as Kölling and Nösger, with individual variations. ... The remaining theologians — even the conservative ones — reject the old doctrine." [Zöckler](#) names⁹⁰⁰⁾ as lonely representatives of the old doctrine: Kohlbrügge, Gaußen, Kuyper, and "on the Lutheran side especially Walther in St. Louis and the Missouri Synod led by him." Most recent American theologians in Reformed church fellowships have also abandoned the inspiration of Scripture.⁹⁰¹⁾ Well-known exceptions are Charles Hodge of Princeton, William Shedd of Union Seminary, New York, and Benjamin B. Warfield of Princeton.⁹⁰²⁾ In Germany, of the theologians who generally.

900) *Handbuch der theol. Wissenschaften* 2 III, 149.

901) Hence the call of the "fundamentalists" addressed to "the laity" to form a union against the unbelieving generation of pastors raised in the "skeptical schools and seminaries of to-day". Cf. [L. u. W. 1923, 89](#) f. From among the fundamentalists, [John Horsch](#) has recently written an excellent paper in which American liberalism is resolutely opposed. The title of the writing is: [Modern Religious Liberalism](#). The Destructiveness and Irrationality of the New Theology. Fundamental Truth Depot, Scottsdale, Pa. 331 pages. Cf. the notice of this writing in [L. u. W. 1922, pp. 179](#) ff. [F.B.]

902) [Charles Hodge](#), *Systematic Theology*, 1873, 3 vols. He says 1, 170: "Admitting that the Scriptures do contain, in a few instances, discrepancies which, with our present means of knowledge, we are unable satisfactorily to explain, they furnish no rational ground for denying their infallibility. The Scripture cannot be broken. (John 10:35.) This is the whole doctrine of plenary inspiration, taught by the lips of Christ Himself." But Hodge makes unnecessary bows to geologists and astronomers here and there, weakening his point. — [William Shedd](#), *Dogmatic Theology*, 2 vols. and 1 supplement 2 1889, I, 93. 103: "Scripture itself asserts verbal inspiration. ... Those who contend that the Bible is fallible because it contains a human element commit the same error in kind with those who assert that Jesus Christ was sinful because He had a human nature in His complex person. The human element ... is not a fallible element, because it is blended with the divine element of inspiration and kept free from human error." But the same remark applies to Shedd as to Hodge. — [Benjamin B. Warfield](#), to our knowledge, taught the inspiration and absolute inerrancy of Scripture until his recent death († 1921), a position he held as early as his inaugural address at Princeton (1887) (reprinted in the *Presbyterian Quarterly*, p. 389 sqq).

known, only Philippi has so far returned to the scriptural doctrine of inspiration in the last period of his life.⁹⁰³⁾

If we look further, we find that within the Roman Church some theologians, and those of eminent name, have limited inspiration to the mysteries of the faith or to the main things, but in other things have assumed a mere preservation from error.⁹⁰⁴⁾ Some others have gone further and have expressly admitted the possibility and reality of error.⁹⁰⁵⁾ Socinians and

He had to experience hostility and ridicule from within his own ranks, although he was comforted by the fact that an "entire Lutheran synod" unanimously confessed to the inspiration of Scripture.

903) That Philippi revoked his earlier position, according to which he still admitted the possibility of an error in the Scriptures, in the third edition of his Glaubenslehre", was already mentioned above (p. 270). Of lesser-known German theologians, Wilhelm Rohnert (Dogmatik der ev.-luth. K., 1902) confesses to "the much-maligned old-church doctrine of inspiration." — A detailed exposition and evaluation of the modern-theological doctrine of inspiration is found in the 11th Report of the Synodical Conference, 1886." [[English translation here.](#)]

904) Thus the Jesuit Franz Suarez († 1617). Quenstedt quotes, Syst. I, 106, from Suarez's treatise *De Fide, disp. 5, sect. 3, § H 5 and 15: Hic modus* (whereby the Holy Spirit also presents the words) *est maxime proprius et perfectus et verisimilius est, observari a Spiritu Sancto, quoties mysteria, quae scribuntur, supernaturalia sunt et captum humanum excedunt.* ["This method (whereby the Holy Spirit also presents the words) is most proper and perfect and is more likely to be observed by the Holy Spirit whenever the mysteries that are written are supernatural and exceed human comprehension."] Suarez adds, however: *Non videtur autem necessarium, ut semper dicentur verba hoc peculiari modo; quando enim Autor Canonicus scribit aliquid, quod secundum se humanum est et subiaceat sensibus, satis videtur, quod Spiritus illi specialiter assistat et custodiat illum ab omni errore et falsitate et ab omnibus verbis, quae non expediunt vel decent talem Scripturam.* [[Google](#)] Quenstedt adds: *Suaresii sententiam laudat et approbat D. Georgius Calixtus Exercit. de autoritate Scripturae, thes. 47.* ["Dr. Georgius Calixt gives praises and approves the opinion of Suarezius. on the authority of Scripture, thes. 47."]

905) Quenstedt refers I, 114 from Pighius († 1542) and quotes from his treatise on the *Hierarchy Ecclesiastica, I. 1, c. 2: Matthaeus et Iohannes evangelistae potuerunt et labi memoria et mentiri. ... Quis certos nos reddet vera esse et certa, quae scribunt omnia de Christo (praesertim Marcus et Luke), quae nunquam viderant, sed crediderunt narrantibus aliis?* [[Google](#)] Quenstedt also reminds us that Erasmus, in his remarks on ch. 2 and 27 of the Gospel of Matthew, says: *evangelistas testimonia huiusmodi non e libris deprompsisse, sed, memoriae fidentes, ita ut fit, lapsos esse....* However, Quenstedt also reports I, 117, that D. Eck, *acerissimus alias errorum et superstitionum papisticarum propugnator*, attacked Erasmus very sharply in a public letter. This has rightly been cited as proof of the fact (so also by Walther in L. u. W. 1886, p. 35 f.) that in the papacy the inspiration of Scripture was considered a fixed doctrine. We put here the beginning

Arminians assume errors in Scripture in "incidental matters."⁹⁰⁶ It may also be pointed out here that old and new enthusiasts, such as the Quakers, etc., in the interest of their

of the longer quotation that Quenstedt: *Istis verbis innuere videris, evangelistas more humano scripsisse et quod memoriae confisi haec scripserint, quod libros videre neglexerint, quod ita, hoc est, ob eam causam lapsi sint. Audi me, Erasme, arbitrarisne, Christianum patienter laturum, evangelistas in evangeliis lapsos? Si hic vacillat Sacrae Scripturae auctoritas, quae pars alia sine suspitione erroris erit? ut pulcherrimo argumento Aur. Augustinus collegit.* [Google]

906) Faustus Socinus in *De Auctoritate Scripturae*, c. 1, p. 15: *Quaedam in Scriptura per se ipsa falsa apparere, sed quae parvi sint momenti, p. 71: fieri potuisse, ut evangelistae et apostoli in aliquibus leviter errarint.* ["Certain things in Scripture appear to be false in themselves, but which are of little importance, p. 71: it was possible that the evangelists and apostles erred slightly in some respects."] (In Quenstedt 1, 114. More detailed in Günther, *Symbolik* 4, p. 97.) On the position of the Socinians on Scripture also Schneckenburger, "Kleinere Protest. Kirchenparteien," p. 34 f.: "Socinus limits the reliability (of Scripture) to that which belongs to the doctrine. ... On subordinate points he admits errors." It is precisely "what belongs to the doctrine of Scripture," Christ's deity and vicarious satisfaction, that Socinus denies, and from this then naturally flows the denial of the inspiration of Scripture. If we consider what more recent Unitarians teach of the doctrines of Scripture, we are confronted here with a completely factual agreement with modern theology, even that which calls itself positive. Günther, op. cit., p. 96 f.: "In C. W. Wendte's What do Unitarians Believe? it is said: 'To me the Bible is not a fetish, a literally inspired and infallible oracle of God.' (p. 15.) *Unitarian Principles and Doctrines* states: 'The Unitarians hold the books of the Bible to be the deed of God's doctrine to the Jewish people and to the early Christians through their wise men and their prophets. Their doctrine of the Bible is that it is a collection of books on various subjects — historical, biographical, poetical, and moral, of varying value, but mostly with a religious attitude and purpose. The inspiration they find in the Bible is an inspiration of the men whose story is told, not an inspiration of the words and letters. The Old Testament is the literature of the Jewish people, the New Testament the early Christian literature. The Unitarians value the Bible as much as any sect; they use it in their churches, use it in their families, help gladly in its distribution, but they do not make an idol of this sacred book, nor do they revere its name. They esteem it for the ideas it asserts and for the truth it contains, and do not make more of it than it really is, nor do they claim it to be something it never claims to be.' (p. 23.) *Scriptural Belief of Unitarian Christians* states: 'Unitarians believe that the Bible contains the Word of God, not that every word it contains is God's Word.'" — On the Arminian doctrine of Scripture Schneckenburger op. cit. p. 10 f. Günther l. c., p. 97. Episcopus asserts *Inst. Theol.* IV, 1, 4: *scriptores sanctos potuisse labi et reipsa lapsos esse memoria in rebus levibus et nihil ad salutem pertinentibus.*

"inner light" or an "immediate revelation" do not want to "identify" Scripture and the Word of God and in this respect walk in the paths of modern theology. There is a principled agreement here. The enthusiast's familiar addresses of the "Spirit," of "inner light," of "immediate revelation," etc., have the same meaning as the addresses of modern theologians of a "self-certainty" of Christianity and its theology, that is, of a certainty that does not depend on Holy Scriptures but "rests in itself and is immediate truth" (Erlangen Theology). And if the enthusiasts then go on to consider the "spirit," the "inner light," etc. for the "main source" or the "real source of truth" and want to let the Scriptures count only as a "subordinate rule," this corresponds exactly to the position of modern theology, which likewise turns everything upside down in the Christian church by abandoning Scripture as the source and norm of Christian doctrine, withdraws to the "pious self-consciousness" of the theologizing subject, the "experience" as an allegedly "storm-free castle," and from here corrects Scripture.⁹⁰⁷⁾ —

907) On the Quaker position on Scripture and its connection with the "Orthodox Reformed" position on Scripture, see Schneckenburger, loc. cit. Quakerism represents the consistent implementation of the Orthodox Reformed doctrine, insofar as it allows the saving revelation of grace and the effect of grace of the Holy Spirit to take place not through the external word of Scripture, but apart from and alongside it. "All this the Quakers push a step further and reach quite close to the line beyond which Scripture as a historical book is actually something quite indifferent, accidental, insubstantial in comparison with immediate enthusiasm." (p. 71.) "It (Scripture) stands under this higher (the immediate word) which first establishes its authority." (p. 73.) Detailed evidence on the Quaker position on Scripture in [Günther op. cit., S. 93. 97.](#) According to [Robert Barclay](#), the Quaker dogmatist, Scripture arose from the revelation of the Holy Spirit; but he adds: *Nihilominus, quominus solummodo sint declaratio fontis et non ipse fons, ideo non existimandae sunt principalis origo omnis veritatis vel cognitionis, nec adaequata primaria regula fidei et morum, licet, cum dent verum et fidele testimonium primae originis, sint et possint existimari regula secundaria, subordinata Spiritui, a quo, quam habent, excellentiam et certitudinem derivant.* [[Google](#)] Barclay, therefore, also does not want the inner light or immediate revelation to be tested according to Scripture, as if Scripture were a more certain norm, because immediate revelation carries certainty in itself. He writes: *Non inde sequitur, quod hae revelationes divinae ad externum Scripturarum testimonium ... tanquam ad nobiliorem aut*

Calvin's position on Scripture has also been discussed quite extensively in more recent times. Seeberg says⁹⁰⁸⁾ of Calvin: "Calvin is thus the creator of the so-called Old Dogmatic theory of inspiration." Seeberg bases his judgment on the fact that Calvin not only calls the Scriptures Old and New Testaments "oracles" of God, but also explicitly says that the Scriptures, including the *historiae* in them (*historiae*), were written *didante Spiritu Sancto*,⁹⁰⁹⁾ the holy writers being *Spiritus Sancti amanuenses*.⁹¹⁰⁾ Seeberg also points out that Calvin is very firm in his opposition to critics who raise questions like this: *Quis nos certiores fecerit a Mose et prophetis haec fuisse scripta, quae sub eorum nominibus leguntur? Quin etiam quaestionem movere audent, fueritne unquam aliquis Moses?* Calvin calls such critics "*nebulones*" and their wisdom "*insania*".⁹¹¹⁾ Seeberg declares his dissent from Heppe, who says of Calvin: "There is no address of an actual inspiration of the record."⁹¹²⁾ But it must be admitted that Calvin in

certiorem normam et amussim examinari debeant. Nam divina revelatio- et illuminatio interna est quiddam per se evidens et clarum, intellectum bene dispositum propria evidentia et claritate cogens ad assentiendum atque insuperabiliter movens et flectens. [Google] Barclay therefore also wants Christians to let inner direct revelation, rather than Holy Scriptures, be their stronghold or "last refuge." He writes: *Illud, ad quod omnes Christianitatis professores, cuiuscunque generis seu speciei sunt, ultimo recurrunt, cum ad extremum pressi sunt et cuius causa cetera omnia fundamenta commendantur et creditu digna habentur et sine quo reiiciuntur; illud, inquam, oportet necessario esse solum certissimum immobile fundamentum omnis fidei Christianae. Sed interna, immediata, obiectiva Spiritus revelatio illud est, ad quod omnes Christianitatis professores ultimo recurrunt etc.. Ergo est solum certissimum immobile fundamentum.* A sad self-deception! But the agreement with modern theology, which likewise, contrary to Scripture, declares the "experience" or "self-certainty" of the theologizing subject to be the "storm-free castle" of Christianity, is obvious. Barclay, therefore, just like the modern theologians, does not want Scripture and the Word of God identified. He says in his *Animadversiones* against Nikolaus Arnold that Scripture is not "actually and absolutely God's Word and must be called so." A quotation from the *American Christian Record* of the Hicksite Quakers is also given there (p. 93), which shows that this party of Quakers also speaks of Scripture in the terminology of modern theologians.

908) *Dogmengesch. II, 385.* 909) *Inst. IV. 8. 6.*

910) *Inst. IV, 8, 9.* 911) *Inst. I, 8, 9.*

912) *Die Dogmatik d. ev.-ref. K., 1861, p. 16 f.*

contradiction with his direct statements that the Scriptures were written *dictante Spiritu Sancto* and that the holy writers were to be called *Spiritus Sancti amanuenses*, occasionally ascribes to the evangelists incorrect quotation of Old Testament scriptural passages.⁹¹³⁾ Here, then, is an inconsistency on Calvin's part. But there is another point to be made in order not to overestimate Calvin's confession of the inspiration of Scripture. It must be remembered that it is of little practical value for both the older and the newer Calvinist theologians (Hodge, Shedd, Böhl, etc.) to teach verbal inspiration so long as they really remain Calvinists in the doctrines peculiar to Calvinism. As true Calvinists, they teach that the redemption which came through Christ does not extend to all men, but only to a part of them. Consequently, they also teach with Calvin that the purpose of the doctrines of Scripture is not to lead all men to faith and salvation, but to harden the greatest part of men. Calvin writes:⁹¹⁴⁾ Quos [Deus] in vitae contumeliam et mortis exitum creavit, ut irae suae organa forent et severitatis exempla, eos, ut in finem suum perveniant, nunc audiendi Verbi sui facultate privat, nunc eius praedicatione magis excoecat et obstupefacit. Furthermore, old and new Calvinists teach that men who are actually enlightened to faith and salvation are not made partakers of this enlightenment through the external word of Scripture, but without it through an immediate illumination of the Holy Spirit. It is obvious that this completely devalues the truth that the Scriptures are the inspired Word of God. Calvinists must — as has been pointed out from their own midst —⁹¹⁵⁾ become Lutheran, that is, they must forget the *gratia particularis* and the *immediata Spiritus Sancti operatio* if they are to draw comfort from the Word of Scripture as God's Word under the terrors of the law. Such forgetting takes place by God's grace in many cases.⁹¹⁶⁾ The same

913) Calvin remarks, *Comment, super Ioh.* (Tholuck's edition, Berlin 1833, p. 346): *Quum illic [Ps. 22] queratur David, se hostibus praedae fuisse, metaphorice sub nomine vestium sua omnia designat, ac si uno verbo dixisset, spoliatum se ac nudatum ab improbis fuisse. Quam figuram dum negligunt evangelistae, a nativo sensu discedunt.* ["When there [Ps. 22] David complains that he was a prey to his enemies, metaphorically he designates everything under the name of his 'clothes', as if he had said in one word that he had been stripped and stripped bare by the wicked. Which form, while the evangelists neglect, they depart from the native sense."]

914) *Inst.* III, 24, 12. 915) Cf. III, 201 ff.

916) This subject has already been dealt with on other occasions, with the necessary supporting documents, pp. 25-28 and 29-31.

practical devaluation of the inspiration of the Scripture is present with the synergists, in case they still confess the inspiration of the Scripture. Because the synergists make the attainment of God's grace dependent on an achievement on the part of man (self-decision, self-determination, "different behavior", lesser guilt in comparison with other men), and because the required achievement is not to be found in any man,⁹¹⁷⁾ with their restriction of sola gratia they erect just as firm a blockade against the attainment of God's grace as the Calvinists with their restriction of universalis gratia. Christian faith, which is counted by God as righteousness, holds that God justifies the ungodly (τον άσεβή).⁹¹⁸⁾ He who thinks himself better or less guilty before God in comparison with other men excludes himself *eo ipso* from grace.⁹¹⁹⁾ Salvation for the synergists lies precisely as for the Calvinists in inconsistency. As the Calvinists forget the limitation of universalis gratia, so the Synergists must forget the limitation of sola gratia if the truth that Scripture is God's own Word of God is to be of any practical use to them. This forgetting, too, no doubt takes place in many cases. But this, too, is due merely to divine grace, which delivers from an error that is in itself pernicious to the soul.⁹²⁰⁾ It is also self-evident that the Roman theologians, in practice, completely devalue their confession of the inspiration of Scripture by leaving the authentic exposition of Scripture to the Pope. By this exegetical method they bring it about, as much as there is in them, that not God speaks to men through his Word, the Holy Scriptures, and teaches and governs them, but the Pope — under the appearance of Scripture — subjects the Church and the world to his papal "I". Luther rightly declares the principle of the "Romanists" that "it behooves no one but the pope to interpret Scripture" to be one of the "three walls" behind which the papacy entrenches itself and seeks to establish and maintain its rule.⁹²¹⁾

917) Rom. 3:19: υπόδικος πας δ κόσμος τῷ θεῷ. V. 23: ὃν γὰρ ἐστὶν διαστολή.

918) Rom. 4:5. 919) Luke 18:9-14; Rom. 11:22.

920) This point, too, has already been dealt with on p. 31. Further explanations II, 591 ff; III, 144 ff.

921) To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation, X, 269 f.

7. Luther and the Inspiration of Holy Scriptures. [^]

It has had to be pointed out repeatedly that modern theology, in denying the inspiration of Scripture, attempts to make Luther *particeps criminis*. Only the later dogmatists — so it is almost universally asserted — built up an "artificial theory" of inspiration, according to which Scripture and the Word of God are to be "identified" absolutely. In Luther, on the other hand, there is no mistaking a freer position on Scripture. Cremer calls the doctrine of inspiration of the dogmatists "a pure novelty"⁹²²⁾ Seeberg cannot even imagine, because of certain statements of Luther, that verbal inspiration should have been in Luther's mind.⁹²³⁾ In Nitzsch-Stephan, on the one hand, it is admitted that Luther "put Holy Scriptures in the place of church authority [under the papacy]"; on the other hand, it is asserted that "clear traces" of a freer conception of the inspiration of Scripture are found in Luther. "On the Lutheran side a tightening of the doctrine of inspiration begins with Flacius and Chemnitz. This was fully formed by the Protestant scholastics of the 17th and 18th centuries since the example given by Johann Gerhard as early as 1610 in *Locus de Scriptura* and continued in 1625 in *Exegesis Ueberior Loci de Scriptura*. It was believed that the Catholics, the Socinians, the Arminians, and other parties could be fought victoriously only by extending the divine prestige of Scripture to the letter [to the words of Scripture]. The Bible was not both a document of divine revelation or of the Word and a divine religious textbook. ... In fullest scholastic aggravation we meet with the developed theory of inspiration among the dogmatists who sought to maintain the old orthodox system against Calixtus and the syncretists."⁹²⁴⁾ That Luther took a free position on the doctrine of inspiration has been asserted not only by German but also by American theologians, e.g., Dr. Charles A. Briggs.⁹²⁵⁾

922) RE. ². 3 VI, 755. 923) *Dogmengesch.* ² II, 289, note 1.

924) *Ev. Dogmatik* 3, p. 249.

925) Cf. *Presbytery of New York*. [The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America against the Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D. D. Argument of the Rev. I. Lampe, D. D., a member of the Prosecuting Committee, p. 54](#) sqq. — Likewise the rebuttal: [The Other Side](#). By S. A. Farrand, Ph. D. 1897.

But this assertion is entirely outside the realm of historical truth. The dissent between Luther and the Lutheran dogmatists concerning the doctrine of inspiration is pure invention. The real difference between Luther and the dogmatists is that the dogmatists only weakly parrot what Luther taught much more powerfully from Scripture about Scripture. Let us recall again what Quenstedt, for example, says of Scripture as the inspired Word of God. Quenstedt writes: ⁹²⁶⁾ "The canonical Holy Scriptures in the basic text are infallible truth and free from all error, or, what is the same thing, in the canonical Holy Scriptures there is found no lie, no incorrectness, no, not even the slightest error, whether in things, whether in words, but all and the individual things reported in them are absolutely true, whether they concern doctrine or morals, whether they concern history, chronology, description of places or naming; no ignorance, no carelessness or forgetfulness, no error of memory can or may be ascribed to the writers of the Holy Scriptures in writing them." This statement of Quenstedt's about Scripture has been called a *dictum horribile*. But everything that Quenstedt's statement contains about Scripture, Luther also says about Scripture, just going into the details mentioned by Quenstedt. Only this happens on Luther's part, as has already been noted, with incomparably greater power. In order to demonstrate this, we will summarize here what Luther says first about the whole of Scripture, and then add what he says about details in which a deviation from the doctrines of the dogmatists has been ascribed to them. In doing so, it cannot be avoided that parts of Luther's words are repeated that have already been mentioned in another context and for another reason.

Of the whole Scriptures Luther says: "So then one gives to the Holy Spirit the whole Holy Scriptures."⁹²⁷⁾ "The Holy Scriptures did not grow on earth."⁹²⁸⁾ "The Holy Scriptures are spoken by the Holy Spirit."⁹²⁹⁾ It is "the Holy Spirit's book."⁹³⁰⁾ It is "God's letter" to men.⁹³¹⁾ Such and similar sayings could be multiplied into the hundreds.

926) <i>Systema</i> I, 112.	927) III, 1890 .	928) VII, 2095 .
929) III, 1895 .	930) IX, 1775 .	931) I, 1055 .

But what Luther says of the whole of Scripture, he also holds consistently in every respect and in relation to all the individual questions that have been raised concerning the divine authority of Scripture. As is well known, modern theology strongly urges that a "human side" be recognized in Scripture. This "human side" had been neglected by the ancient theologians, and to bring this "human side" duly to the fore is the special *donum* of modern theology. Modern theology has a sharply developed sense for "reality". Luther, however, also knows a "human side" of Scripture, but only in the sense that God had His Word written by men in human language. Luther is terrorized by those who dare to claim that the Scriptures are not entirely and in all parts the Word of God, because the writers of the Scriptures, such as Peter and Paul, were also men. Luther remarks, as we have already seen, on 1 Petr. 3:15:⁹³²⁾ "If they do so and say: You preach that one should not teach the doctrine of men, when St. Peter and Paul, even Christ Himself, were men; if you hear such people who are so blinded and obdurate that they deny that this is the Word of God, what the apostles have spoken and written, or doubt it, then only be silent, do not speak a word to them and let them go." And Luther records this "identification" of Scripture and the Word of God precisely with respect to those parts of Scripture that seem to us to be very "human." A few examples of this: While Kahnis thinks that one cannot well imagine that the Holy Spirit should have inspired David with what David felt in his heart in the form of a psalm, Luther says of the Psalms: "Methinks the Holy Spirit himself would have taken upon himself the trouble to bring together a short Bible and book of examples of all Christendom and all the saints."⁹³³⁾ Of those who want to give the Psalms, because they describe the movements of the human heart, not to the Holy Spirit, but to the man David, Luther judges that they have a "carnal heart".⁹³⁴⁾

Also about the apparently minor human things (*levicula*), the mention of which already some older and especially the modern theologians consider unworthy of the Holy Spirit,

932) St. L. IX, 1238. 933) Preface to the Psalter, XIV, 23.

934) The Last Words of David, III, ~~2803~~ [sic: III, 1894].

Luther speaks about this in great detail. In his preface to the Old Testament⁹³⁵⁾, Luther warns "every devout Christian" not to be deceived into denying "the high divine majesty" of the minor things mentioned and described in Scripture. "God delights," says Luther, "to describe such little things (as, for example, Jacob's housekeeping and marital state), that he may indicate and testify that he does not disdain, nor have abhorrence, nor wish to be far from housekeeping, from a pious husband, and from wife and children."⁹³⁶⁾ It is as if Luther could not do enough to emphasize and explain how important and full of salutary doctrines these apparently minor things were. Therefore, these minor things should not be kept silent in the church, but "they should always be moved and inculcated into the people, namely, why the Holy Spirit, who has a very pure mouth, should speak with such great diligence of these things, which the most holy father, the pope, with his chaste monks and nuns, would not like to think of once as such things, which are quite foul and carnal in their eyes. For they walk in great things of their celibacy and celibate life. But this filth, how the women became pregnant, gave birth to children, and how the spouses were angry with each other, they do not consider worthy to be read. They say that the Holy Spirit, according to his holiness, could have addressed heavenly and other higher things and not such lowly, carnal things. He was supposed to have become a monk or a nun, but now he only tells how the household stood and how Jacob's marriage stood. This annoys us holy and angelic men, who walk above the clouds in the wisdom and spirituality of the angels. But because they despise these little things and are disgusted with them, the Holy Spirit is now hostile to the saints who are so arrogant and glorious, and does not recognize them as his own; he always lets them go in their glory, arrogance and vanity, and goes down to his creatures; he takes care of them and adorns them. For he created the ground, he created man and woman, and blessed them to be fruitful; he subjected the world to them, and it is he who still sustains all things;

935) [St. L. XIV, 2 f.](#)

936) Opp. exeg. Lat. VII, 285-287; [St. L. II, 537 ff.](#)

He feeds and gives milk to the mother to nourish and sustain the child. He does not despise this creature. ... Therefore the Holy Spirit wants to teach us and testify to us, since he deals with these small, human and common things, that we should know that he wants to be with us, take care of us and prove that he is our creator and governor. The papists do not see this, but despise it; therefore they must also fairly bear the penalty for such contempt. ... What better and more useful thing can be taught in the congregation of God than the example of a godly housemother, who prays, sighs, cries out, gives thanks to God, rules the house, does what the office of a pious woman entails, desires to have children, with great chastity, gratitude and godliness? What more should she do? But the pope, cardinals and bishops should not see this; for they are not worthy. The Holy Spirit always makes them walk in strange, great, and supernatural things, and that they only marvel at their chastity and boast of it, which would be worthy of being pointed out to the common house; but these things they shall by no means see. But in the meantime the Holy Spirit leads and governs the holy women in such a way that he testifies that they are his creatures whom he wants to govern not only according to the spirit but also according to the flesh, that they should call on God, pray, thank him for the children and be obedient to their husbands" etc.

In the Old Testament Scriptures, we find passages in which gross sexual sins are also reported. Old and new theologians have addressed "dirty stories" in the Scriptures, with which one should not burden the Holy Spirit. Luther remarks in his commentary on Gen. 38, where the sin of Judah and Tamar is reported:⁹³⁷⁾ "It is a marvelous diligence of the Holy Spirit to describe this shameful, lewd history, that He also carries out everything so very precisely to the utmost. ... Why then has the most pure mouth of the Holy Spirit descended to such low, despised things, which are also lewd and obscene and, moreover, condemnable, as if such things should be of any use to teach the church and congregation of God? What has the church of God to do with it?" Luther shows

937) [St. L. II, 1200 ff.](#)

then in detail how full of doctrine, punishment, admonition and consolation also such scriptural passages are for the church of God of all times.

Whether someone takes the Christian position on the Scriptures, that is, lets the Scriptures be the Word of God, always becomes clear from the way he takes a stand on the possibility of error in the Scriptures. Christ very decidedly rejects the possibility of error in Scripture when he says: "Scripture cannot (οὐ δύναται) be broken." Philippi had not yet found the Christian position on Scripture as long as he still declared, "One is not to resist from the outset the recognition of the possibility that some subordinate differences are real. ... We would therefore at least not like to say *a priori* with Calov: *Nullus error, vel in leviculis, nullus memoriae lapsus, ... ullum locum habere potest in universa Scriptura Sacra.*" ["*Nullus error, vel in leviculis, nullus memoriae lapsus, ... ullum locum habere potest in universa Scriptura Sacra.*" ["No error, even in the slightest, no lapse of memory, ... can have any place in the entire Sacred Scripture"] Philippi had found the right position on Scripture, decent to a Christian, when he recanted in the third edition of his "Doctrine of the Faith" and declared Calov's *a priori* position on Scripture to be the correct one. This *a priori* position is Luther's position on Scripture. Luther does not want to establish the inerrancy of Scripture only by human investigation (*a posteriori*), but to him it stands firm before all investigation that no error can be found in Scripture. Luther holds this to be true on all sides. If there seems to be a conflict between Scripture and human science, it stands clear to him from the outset that human science is in error and Scripture is right. Thus, as we have already seen, Luther says in regard to the work of six days, "If thou canst not hear it, as it hath been six days, do glory to the Holy Spirit, that he be more learned than thou. For thou shalt thus deal with the Scriptures, that thou mayest think as God Himself speaks." ⁹³⁸⁾ Luther also holds this to be true with respect to all chronological statements of Scripture, thus coming into sharp contrast with all modern theology. Examples: Prof. Hausleiter-Greifswald prefers Josephus' account of Herodias to the report of the Scriptures.⁹³⁹⁾ A. B. Bruce in *The Expositor's Greek Testament* leaves open at least the possibility that Mark 6:17 at least leaves open the possibility that the biblical account is erroneous, even if the error cannot be determined.

938) Sermons on the First Book of Moses, III, 23.

939) L. u. W. 1907, p. 426.

Also Ihmels assumes from the beginning that at least the chronology of the scripture is not infallible.⁹⁴⁰⁾ Luther is different. For him it stands *a priori* certain that in every case where the chronology of the Scriptures differs from that of human historians, the Holy Scriptures are right. He says: "I use them (the human historians) so that I am not urged to be contrary to the Scriptures. For I believe that in the Scriptures God speaks, who is true, but in other histories that very fine men apply their best diligence and fidelity, yet as men, or even least, that their copyists could have erred."⁹⁴¹⁾ This is a topic that Luther, as a great friend of historical studies,⁹⁴²⁾ very often treats. Concerning Gen. 11:27-28 he remarks that according to the chronology "sixty years are lost with Abraham". At the same time, Luther rebukes the "bold people" who may say that there is an error here. He (Luther) has also "diligently brought together and reckoned the years of the world". He defends himself against the assumption that he "knew nothing about such questions or had read about them". Nevertheless, he does not want to belong to the bold people who accuse the Holy Scriptures of a chronological error, but concludes with the humble confession of his "lack of understanding, as is inexpensive; for it is the Holy Spirit alone who knows and understands everything." Luther adds that such obscurities in chronology as Abraham's losing the sixty years were intended by the Holy Spirit "so that no one would stoop to prophesy something certain about the end of the world from the certain reckoning of the years of the world. For even though God knows signs (*signa*) of the Last Day and wants them to be seen and seen, He does not want anyone to know anything certain (*certum aliquid*) about this day, nor even the year, so that devout Christians can practice their faith and fear of God in anticipation of this most beloved and joyful day."⁹⁴³⁾ Regarding Gen 11:11, Luther deals with the question of how Arphaxad could have been born two years after the Flood. He points to possibilities of harmonization, but adds that our faith is not endangered if the attempts at harmonization do not produce a certain result. But the non-endangerment of faith

940) [Central Questions 2, p. 72.](#) 941) [St. L. XIV, 491.](#)

942) Writing to the Councilors, [St. L. X, 483 f.](#)

943) [St. L. I, 721 f.](#)

he justifies with the statement, "For this is certain, that the Scriptures do not lie." ⁹⁴⁴⁾ — Just as Luther considers all statements of time in Scripture to be correct *a priori*, because the author of Scripture, the Holy Spirit, "cannot lie," so he also considers all contradictions in Scripture to be absolutely excluded *a priori*. And Luther did not merely take this position on Scripture at the beginning of his public appearance, as more recent people have claimed, but held on to it until the end of his life. In 1520 he wrote: "Scripture cannot err." ⁹⁴⁵⁾ In the same year: "Scripture has never erred." ⁹⁴⁶⁾ In 1524: "Scripture agrees everywhere." ⁹⁴⁷⁾ In 1527: "It is certain that Scripture may not disagree with itself." ⁹⁴⁸⁾ In 1535: "It is impossible that Scripture should disagree with itself, except that the unintelligent, obdurate hypocrites think so." ⁹⁴⁹⁾ From 1541 and 1545 dates Luther's "Chronikon," in which, as we have seen, he says that the chronological data of Scripture are absolutely reliable. Even apparent disarrangements in the chronology of Scripture are, according to Luther, of the Holy Spirit. In his exposition of the prophet Habakkuk he remarks, ⁹⁵⁰⁾ that the prophets seem to keep no order, in that, addressing the Jewish kingdom, they break off short and begin to speak of Christ. But this too is of the Holy Spirit. Luther says: "The Holy Spirit is to blame for not being able to speak well, but speaking like a drunkard or fool, he mixes it up and utters wild, strange words and passages. But it is our fault that we have not understood the language nor known the way of the prophets. For this can never be otherwise, the Holy Spirit is wise and makes the prophets also wise. A wise man must be able to address, that never fails." Luther says of the evangelist Matthew, ⁹⁵¹⁾ that he "mixes and mixes together" Jerusalem's destruction and the end of the world in ch. 24, but adds, "and it is also the Holy Spirit's way in the Scriptures that He speaks thus." What Luther says of mingling, not keeping order, etc. in the accounts of Scripture, more recent theologians use as evidence

 944) [St. L. I, 713 f.](#) 945) W. XIX. 1309. 946) [St. L. XX, 798.](#)

947) [St. L. III, 18.](#) 948) [St. L. XX, 798.](#)

949) [St. L. IX, 356.](#) Walch VIII, 2141. Erl. Gal. I, 388 sq.

950) [St. L. XIV, 1418.](#)

951) Sermon on Matt. 24:8-14. [St. L. VII, 1297.](#)

that Luther "kept open the possibility of historical inaccuracies and contradictions."⁹⁵²⁾ But they refrain from adding that Luther attributes this "mingling together," etc., to the intention of the Holy Spirit. Kahnis also argues against the inspiration of Scripture the fact that the evangelists do not use the same words in the account of the institution of the Lord's Supper.⁹⁵³⁾ Luther, on the other hand, writes against the papists who declared the administration of the Lord's Supper invalid because of the omission of only one word in the canon of the Mass: "They have not noticed that the Holy Spirit has diligently arranged that no evangelist agrees with the other in the same words."⁹⁵⁴⁾

We saw that it belongs to the nature of modern theology to place the inspiration of the Scriptures essentially on the same level with the enlightenment of all Christians, to assume not a specific but only a gradual difference between the writers of the Holy Scriptures and all Christians and their teachers with regard to the knowledge of the truth and the doctrines of the same. Just as enlightenment does not make Christians and their teachers infallible, so the inspiration of the writers of the Scriptures does not ensure the infallibility of the Scriptures, even though the writers of the Scriptures cannot be denied a richer fullness of the Holy Spirit. Luther, on the other hand, assumes not merely a gradual but a specific difference between illumination and inspiration, or — which is the same thing — between enlightened teachers of the Church and the inspired writers of Holy Scriptures. What the inspired writers of Holy Scriptures teach is absolutely God's own Word of God; as far as the enlightened teachers of the Church are concerned, to whom Luther also counts himself, they teach God's Word only insofar as and to the extent that "we repeat and preach what we have heard and learned from the prophets and apostles."⁹⁵⁵⁾ In his *Disputatio de Fide* of 1535, however, Luther first says that it is one and the same Holy Spirit who was in the apostles and is active in all Christians and their teachers for right enlightenment. But then he draws a sharp line of distinction between the apostles on the one hand and all Christians and all later

952) [Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 268](#).

953) Quote in Baier-Walther [I, 102](#), from [Kahnis' Dogmatik I 1, 666](#).

954) On the Abuse of the Mass. [St. L. XIX, 1104](#). Walch, 1348.

955) Exposition of the last words of David, 1543. III, 2797.

teachers on the other, "so that the church may not be divided." Indeed, he adds:⁹⁵⁶⁾ "We are not all apostles sent to us as *infallible* teachers (*infallibiles doctores*) by a fixed decree of God (*certo Dei decreto*). Therefore, it is not they but we who can err and fall short (*falli*) in the faith, because we are without such a decree of God." Luther makes an equally sharp distinction between enlightenment, which belongs to all Christians and all Christian doctrines, and inspiration, where he defines a prophet as distinct from all later teachers. He says in his exposition on several chapters of Exodus from 1525:⁹⁵⁷⁾ "A prophet is called who has his mind from God without means, to whom the Holy Spirit takes the Word into his mouth. ... No one can make a prophet by human sermon and doctrine, and even though it is God's Word, and I [Luther] preach the Word in the purest way, I do not make a prophet; I can make a wise and understanding man. As, Matthew in the 23rd chapter, 'wise men' are called who drew the teaching from the prophets, because God speaks through people and not without means. But prophets are those who have the doctrines of God without any means." Also, what was already known to the prophets and apostles, or what they took from already existing Holy Scriptures, was given to them "directly," inasmuch as the Holy Spirit "put into their mouths" the words about what was already known to them or about what was taken from Scripture. As happened to the apostles on the day of Pentecost, when they so powerfully took hold of the Scriptures, "as if they had studied in them a hundred thousand years and had learned the same in the best way."⁹⁵⁸⁾ Luther adds: "I [Luther] could not do such a certain taking hold of the Scriptures, whether I am indeed a doctor of the Holy Scriptures."

Modern theologians further distinguish degrees in inspiration. As examples we mentioned among the German theologians Kahn, among the American Henry E. Jacobs. The former tries to divide the books of Holy Scriptures into three classes, depending on whether they are more or less inspired. The latter says, among other things, "A text from Genesis and one from John, one from the Psalms and one from Romans, cannot stand upon the same footing."⁹⁵⁹⁾ This, of course, completely abandons

956) Opp. V. a. IV, 381. [St. L. XIX, 1442](#). 957) [St. L. III, 785](#).

958) Erl. Ausg. 2 5, 183.

959) Cf. above, p. 221.

the scriptural concept of inspiration. According to the Scriptures, inspiration is a concept that is capable neither of increase nor of decrease. Quenstedt rightly remarks against the Jesuit Bonfrère († 1643) and others that in Scripture there is not the slightest trace (*nec vola nec vestigium*) that one part of Scripture is more divine (*divinius*) than another.⁹⁶⁰⁾ Christ ascribes the same divinity to all parts of the Scriptures when he says John 10:35 that "the Scriptures" cannot be broken. And according to 2 Tim. 3:16; Rom. 3:2; 2 Petr. 1:21; 1 Petr. 1:10-12; Eph. 2:20 etc. the whole scripture is equally a divine product. Luther does not allow any degrees of inspiration. "So then one gives all Scripture to the Holy Spirit."⁹⁶¹⁾ To be sure, Luther distinguishes between the books of Holy Scriptures insofar as they are more or less important according to their content for the origin and preservation of the Christian faith. In this sense, he calls the Gospel of John the "some tender, right chief Gospel," because it is primarily concerned with doctrine, while the other Gospels report more facts or events from the life of Christ. For the same reason, Luther also calls "St. Paul's Epistles, especially the one to the Romans, and St. Peter's first Epistle" from the letters of the apostles. Peter's first epistle" the "right core and marrow" among all books, "which should also inexpensively be the first, and it would be advisable for every Christian to read them first and foremost and to make them as common to him as daily bread through daily reading."⁹⁶²⁾ From this, newer theologians think they can prove that according to Luther's "actual opinion" the Scriptures are not in all parts equally the word of the Holy Spirit.⁹⁶³⁾ But this is a misunderstanding and misuse of Luther's words. Although Luther calls the Gospel of John the "tender, right main Gospel" because it primarily drives the doctrine, he also gives the other Gospels in all parts to the Holy Spirit. We already heard that Luther refers to the external order of facts in Matthew, according to which this evangelist (chapter 24) "mixes and mingles" the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world, as the Holy Spirit's

 960) Syst. 1, 101 f. On Bonfrère, cf. W. S. Reilly in [The Catholic Encyclopedia, II, 655 sq.](#)

961) [St. L. III, 1890.](#) 962) [St. L. XIV, 90 f.](#)

963) Thus in [Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 268](#); Seeberg, [Dogmengesch.² II, 287 f.](#)

way of speaking.⁹⁶⁴) Furthermore, Luther says that the Holy Spirit has diligently arranged the words of the Lord's Supper, which are not found in John, but in the other Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, in such a way that in the words of the Lord's Supper no evangelist coincides with the other.⁹⁶⁵) Quenstedt has been credited with an almost unbelievable overstretching of the concept of inspiration, that he does not leave the election of the words (*voces*) and the mode of expression (*phrasis*) to the discretion or human consideration of the sacred writers, but ascribes it to divine inspiration. Quenstedt teaches, first of all, as we have already seen in another section,⁹⁶⁶) that the Holy Spirit in inspiration did not create a new language according to vocabulary and mode of expression, but in this he made himself comfortable with the prevailing use of language (*genus loquendi*) known and familiar to the writers. Quenstedt says: *Prout informati aut assuefacti erant ad sublimius humilivusve loquendi scribendique genus, sic eodem usus Spiritus Sanctus sese indoli hominum attemperare et condescendere voluit atque ita res easdem per alios magnificentius, per alios tenuius exprimere*. ["According as they were informed or accustomed to a higher or lower kind of speaking and writing, so by the same use the Holy Spirit wished to conform and condescend to the nature of men, and thus to express the same things more magnificently through others, and more subtly through others."] But then Quenstedt adds, "That the sacred writers, however, used these, and not other phrases (*phrasis*), these and not other words (*voces*) or synonymous (*aequipollentes*), comes solely from the divine impulse and inspiration." But this is exactly how Luther describes inspiration. He, too, lets the election of certain words and the certain mode of expression depend on inspiration. He says to Ps. 127:3: "Not only the words (*vocabula*), but also the mode of expression (*phrasis*), of which the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures make use, is from God (*divina*)."⁹⁶⁷) To make matters worse, we would like to recall the well-known words from Luther's Instruction for the Study of Theology, from which it is also clear that Luther understood by inspiration of Scripture nothing other than "verbal inspiration." For a more detailed explanation of "*meditatio*" he says: "On the other hand, you shall meditate, that is, not only in the heart, but also outwardly, the oral address and literal words in the Book [*scil.* in the Holy Scriptures] always driving and rubbing, reading and rereading, with

 964) [St. L. VII, 1297](#). 965) [St. L. XIX, 1104](#).

966) p. 282.

967) Erl. Opp. exeg. Lat. XX, 96. [st. I. IV, 1960](#).

diligent attention and reflection, what the Holy Spirit means by it [*scil.* by the "literal word"]. And beware that you do not become weary or think that you have read, heard, and said it once or twice enough, and that you understand it all too well; for no special theologian will ever come out of it." Thus powerfully does Luther bind all theological study and all effort to know divine truth to the "literal words in the book," to verbal inspiration. We repeat what we noted at the beginning of this section: If we want to speak of a difference between Luther and the orthodox Lutheran dogmatists, the difference is not that Luther took a "freer stand" on Scripture, but that he teaches the complete "identification" of Scripture and the Word of God much more powerfully and all-sidedly than do the dogmatists.

Of course, we cannot close this section "Luther and the Inspiration of Scripture" without referring to several of Luther's sayings, which are cited with great confidence by almost all recent theologians as evidence of Luther's "free" position on Scripture. However, if we examine these sayings, it turns out that they do not prove Luther's "free" position on Scripture, but the unscientific and frivolous manner of modern theologians in quoting Luther. Partly the quoted sayings do not deal with the inspiration of Scripture at all, partly they are completely taken out of context and quoted just against the sense in which they are used by Luther. They belong to the large class of quotations that are passed on from one generation to another without examination.

This is true to the fullest extent of a quotation that is perhaps the most widespread, has also probably caused the greatest stir, and has misled many about Luther's position on Scripture. We mean the "hay, straw, and stubble" quote. To prove that Luther "admitted errors in Scripture," Tholuck wrote in the first edition of Duke's "Realenzyklopädie": "In his preface to Linken's notes on the five books of Moses (Walch XIV, 172) he says: 'Have no doubt studied the prophets in Moses and the last prophets in the first, and have written down their good thoughts, inspired by the Holy Spirit, in a book. But whether the same good, faithful teachers and researchers in the Scriptures were sometimes accompanied by hay, straw, and stubble, and not by pure

silver, gold, and precious stones, the ground remains there; the fire consumes the rest." ⁹⁶⁸⁾ In the second edition of Herzog's "Realenzyklopädie" the article by Tholuck has been replaced by an article by Cremer. But Cremer again refers to the quoted words of Luther to show that Luther admits errors in Scripture. Cremer writes: "On the one hand, the Holy Scriptures are for Luther a book in which 'in one letter, even in one title, there is more and greater than in heaven and earth'; on the other hand, he knows how to say of hay, straw, and stubble, which the prophets, in their own good thoughts, also ran under." ⁹⁶⁹⁾ Cremer's article also passed into the third and latest edition of Herzog's Encyclopedia. ⁹⁷⁰⁾ Kahn also asserted, "Of the prophets Luther says that the same studied Moses and their predecessors, and built upon them not always gold and silver, but also hay, straw, and wood." ⁹⁷¹⁾ What Kahn says is repeated verbatim by Nitzsch-Stephan as late as 1912. ⁹⁷²⁾ But the fact is that in this passage, which is quoted so generally and up to the latest times, Luther does not speak at all of the writing of the Holy Scriptures and thus also not of the inspiration of the Scriptures, as was also explained in detail in *Lehre und Wehre*. ⁹⁷³⁾ Incorrect use of the words of Luther in question is also admitted in the tenth edition of Luthardt's "Compendium of Dogmatics" in a note. While in the text even of this edition the "hay, straw, and stubble" quotation is still used as proof of Luther's free position on Scripture, a [note p. 328](#) states, "These words, however, according to Luther's correct understanding, do not go to the biblical writers, but to the exegetes; cf. Kawerau, 'Theol. Lit.-Ztg.' 1895, S. 216." In fact, it is quite impossible to refer Luther's words to "the biblical writers," that is, to the prophets, insofar as they wrote the Bible of the Old Testament. Rather, Luther is addressing the Old Testament prophets at those times when they were not driven as infallible organs of the Holy Spirit to write Holy Scriptures

968) RE. 1 VI, 695 under "Inspiration"; year of printing: 1856.

969) RE. ² VI, 753 f.; year printed: 1880.

970) RE. ³ IX, 191; year of printing: 1901.

971) [Lutheran Dogmatics 2 I, 275](#)

. 972) [Lutheran Dogmatics](#)

[3, p. 268.](#)

973) [1885, pp. 329](#) ff; [1886, pp. 8](#) ff.

but outside the state of this inspiration made the existing Scriptures of the Old Testament, just like other people, an object of study and thereby wrote out "in a book" the good thoughts which the Holy Spirit gave them during this study. Luther's words refer to this study and writing outside of the state of inspiration to write down the Holy Scriptures: "But whether the same good, faithful teachers and researchers in the Scriptures sometimes also built with hay, straw and wood and not pure silver, gold and precious stone, the foundation remains there; the other is consumed by fire." Indeed, Luther teaches that the prophets of the Old Testament did not speak and write God's Word infallibly at all times, but only temporarily by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He remarks e.g. on Gen. 44:18:⁹⁷⁴⁾ "The *theologi* have a common saying that they say: *Spiritus Sanctus non semper tangit corda prophetarum*, that is, the Holy Spirit does not stir the hearts of the prophets all the time. The enlightenments of the prophets do not last always, forever, without ceasing. Just as Esaias did not always and continually have revelations (*continuas et assiduas revelationes*) of high, great things, but only at special times. The same is shown by the example of the prophet Elisha, when he says of the Sunamite woman 2 Kings 4:27: 'Let her go, for her soul is troubled, and the Lord has hidden it from me and has not shown it to me. There he confesses that God does not always stir the hearts of the prophets. Sometimes the Spirit came when they played the harp or psaltery and sang psalms and spiritual hymns."⁹⁷⁵⁾ That Luther, in the passage under address, speaks of the prophets outside their actual prophetic office, that is, of the times when they stood on the same level with other indirectly enlightened "good, faithful teachers and searchers of the Scriptures" and could err, Tholuck has concealed by omitting the words "in this way" when quoting from Luther. Luther's words are, "Have without doubt studied in this way the prophets in Moses and the last prophets in the first." With the "in this way"

974) Walch II, 2417 f.; St. L. II, 1645; Erl., *Opp. ex. Lat.* X, 303 sq

975) In L. u. W. 1886, p. 9, note 1, it is recalled that also Quenstedt and Calov teach the *Spiritus Sanctus non semper tangit corda prophetarum* and substantiate it from the Scriptures.

Luther refers back to the preceding. In the preceding, however, Luther speaks of the study of Scripture, as it is commanded by God to all Christians and all teachers, as he himself [Luther] and also Augustine read and studied Scripture, which "researching and reading" cannot be done, "one must be there with the pen and record what is especially given to him under reading and studying, so that he could remember and retain it." Also in the words that follow Tholuck's quotation from Lord, Luther speaks of doctrines as written by all teachers in the church, including his "dear Lord and friend, Dr. Wenzeslaus Link." After the entire preface to Link's *Annotationes* is printed in [Lehre und Wehre 1885, pp. 329 ff](#), it is certainly rightly added there: "From this it is clear: Luther is not talking about writing Holy Scriptures, but about writing such books as his friend Wenzeslaus Link wrote and to which he [Luther] wrote prefaces. Luther is not talking about writing under the effect of 'inspiration', as we take the word when we address the doctrine of inspiration, but about studying in the Scriptures with writing down 'in a book' what good the Spirit of God gives a Christian when reading the Scriptures. ... Luther speaks here — that we express ourselves in this way — of a daily private study of the prophets; 'for there were not such men as put Moses under the bench, and wrote his own vision, and preached dreams, but practiced themselves in Moses daily and diligently'. And in this sphere Luther leaves open the possibility that 'the same good, faithful teachers and researchers of the Scriptures were sometimes also subjected to hay, straw, wood'. ... So it is clear: Luther does not speak of inspiration at all in this passage, which is quoted so persistently to prove Luther's 'free' position in the doctrine of inspiration. Luthardt, Kahnis, Cremer, etc., either did not read this passage at all, or yet read it without all attention." Walther therefore turned against Luthardt and Cremer with the following words of serious rebuke:⁹⁷⁶⁾ "On the one hand, the professors Luthardt and Cremer are to be excused in a certain respect, since they obviously did not read the passage in its context, but copied Tholuck in good faith; on the other hand, however, it is irresponsible

976) [L. u. W. 1886, p. 10 f.](#)

that in such an important matter, we should have relied on a man like Tholuck, who himself says of Christ, 'that what is necessary for the exposition, which can only be learned by heart, can only have been known and accessible to him [Christ] according to the educational level of his time and the educational means of his upbringing, his social intercourse' [!!], from which Tholuck concludes: 'Even if there is no hermeneutical formal error in the present addresses of the redemption, the impossibility cannot be asserted from the outset, just as little as that of a grammatical linguistic error or a chronological error.' (See Tholuck, *Das Alte Testament im Neuen Testament*. Gotha 1861, p. 59 f.)" In the same context, Walther still points out a double sin here: He rightly rebukes the modern theologians who pursue this evil work on the authority of Luther, whose doctrine they carelessly misrepresent in order to mislead Christians about the divine authority of Scripture. "Is it already an irresponsible sin against the dear man of God Luther, to ascribe to him, for lack of his own hindsight, an opinion, in which, if one compared a hundred other sayings of his, he would stand as the most confused head of the world, yes, an opinion, which he would curse into the abyss of hell, it is a much more appalling sin against thousands who have recognized Luther as the greatest witness of truth after the apostles and prophets, and who have been misled in their faith against all truth by Luther's authority."

Besides the "hay, straw and stubble" quotation, another quotation from Luther has gained great fame among modern theologians. We can briefly call it the "too weak to stab" quote. But even in this quotation, which is also meant to prove Luther's broken position on Scripture, the context is disregarded. For example, when Cremer writes: ⁹⁷⁷⁾ Luther knows to say "of an insufficient proof of the apostle Paul Gal. 4:21 ff. ('zum Stich zu schwach')," this creates the impression, which is also intended by Cremer, as if Luther denies the evidential force at all to the allegory used by Paul Gal. 4 (Sarah and Isaac mean the Christian church, Hagar and Ishmael the people of the law), while Luther only says that the allegory in dispute with

977) RE. ² VI, 753.

the Jews (*contra Iudaeos*), for whom the apostle Paul was not yet an authority, was "too weak to stab". Incidentally, Cremer and all those who urge this expression so strongly that they want to prove Luther's broken position on Scripture from it, could well have considered it worth the effort to look up the Latin original. The expression is taken from Luther's Commentary on the Genesis, in which, as is well known, Luther uses the Latin language. What the translator renders as "too weak to stab" reads in the original: "*in acie minus valet*", that is, "it has less convincing power in a controversy.". The "in controversy" (*in acie*) would have reminded us that Luther does not reject the evidential value of the allegory Gal. 4 absolutely (also for the Christians, to whom Paul is the inspired apostle of Christ), but only in a certain relation, namely in the fight with the Jews.⁹⁷⁸⁾ Walther therefore wrote in regard to this point against Cremer:⁹⁷⁹⁾ "It did not occur to Luther to deny that for Christians who have recognized and therefore acknowledge Paul's authority as that of an inspired writer, the doctrine presented by Paul by means of allegorical interpretation of a story is just as conclusive as any other doctrine presented by him directly, according to the established hermeneutical principle: *Sensus allegoricus non est argumentativus, nisi a Spiritu Sancto traditus*, that is, the allegorical sense is not conclusive unless it is taught by the Holy Spirit Himself." Christians, however, know and believe that in Paul, as the inspired Apostle of Christ, was the Holy Spirit.

 978) In the whole passage, Luther reminds us that a pastor teaches his Christian listeners in a different way than he disputes with the enemies of the church. Luther says: "The godless Jews laugh at us that our fathers (the church fathers are meant) wanted to prove the Trinity from this text [Gen. 18:l ff.], that three men appeared to Abraham and yet he speaks only as with one." Of this Luther judges: "As far as this text is concerned, we admit, however, that the historical understanding against the Jews proves nothing; but sometimes the inauthentic and figurative understanding is also true." Here follows Luther's remark about the allegory Gal. 4:21 ff: "For so does Paul in Gal. 4:22 ff: after he has masterfully proved the doctrine of faith [namely, "from other certain and clear sayings of Scripture"] and, as it were, conquered it with the sword, he then brings in the allegory of Sarah and Hagar, which, although it is too weak in the battle [that is the translation of "*in acie minus valet*" in the St. Louis edition of Luther], because it deviates from the historical understanding, it nevertheless makes the matter of faith its light and adorns it."

979) [L.u.W. 1886, p. 12.](#)

It goes without saying that it is quite improper to cite Luther's distinction between homologomena and antilegomena as evidence of a "free" position in the doctrine of inspiration. Voigt, for example, says "that Luther could not regard Holy Scripture word for word as a product of the Holy Spirit," because he was "over whole books of Holy Scripture ... permitted himself the freest judgment."⁹⁸⁰ In Nitzsch-Stephan we find the remark: "The Revelation of John displeases Luther so much that he considers it neither apostolic nor prophetic."⁹⁸¹ This illogically identifies two things that have nothing to do with each other. The doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture is not about the extent of the canon, that is, not about the question whether the so-called Antilegomena (the Epistles of James and Jude and the Revelation of John) belong to the canon, but about the question whether the books established as canonical (Luther calls them "the right certain main books") are inspired and are God's infallible Word. This, as we have seen in the first part of this section, Luther holds unalterably. But as to the scope of the canon, Luther (like Chemnitz, etc.) holds to the distinction which, according to Eusebius' account (Kirchengesch. III, 25), was made in the early Church between the writings of the New Testament as to their certain or not certain apostolic origin.⁹⁸² Luther expresses this in his preface to the Epistle to the Hebrews thus:⁹⁸³ "Hitherto we have had the right certain main books of the New Testament. These four following ones, however, have had a different reputation before." Hönecke writes:⁹⁸⁴ "A distinction must be made between the extent of the canon and the inspiration of the books of Holy Scriptures which are established as canonical. And there says W. Walther [Professor in Rostock, *Das Erbe der Reformation im Kampfe der Gegenwart*, vol. 1, p. 42 ff.] rightly says that Luther had open questions concerning the scope of the canon; but what is canonical to him has authority for him as the inspired Word of God. This is always overlooked. The newer theologians always want to deduce from Luther's words concerning individual books his position on the

980) *Fundamental Dogmatics*, p. 536.

981) *Ev. Dogmatik*, p. 269. Seeberg, *Dogmengesch.* ² II, 287.

982) *St. L. XIV*, 132. 983) *A. a. O.*, p. 126.

984) *Dogmatik I*,

Word and its inspiration and thus transfer their free position on inspiration to Luther. Rather, it is certain that Luther regarded the Word as inspired, and that the dogmatists of the seventeenth century can rightly call upon him as the constant voice of the Church, and thus that their doctrine is by no means an innovation in relation to Luther." On the same matter Walther of St. Louis expresses himself thus:⁹⁸⁵⁾ "Those who here recall Luther's judgment on the Antilegomena, as he, e. g. the epistle of James 'a right brawling epistle against them' (the epistles of Paul and Peter) (XIV, 105), and from this want to prove Luther's allegedly free views on inspiration, we pass over here, since even the weakest mind sees without much thought how foolish it is, from a derogatory judgment of Luther about a Scripture which he did not consider canonical, what free views he had about the inspiration of those Scriptures which he considered canonical, while the exact opposite is to be concluded from that judgment."

Another assertion of modern theologians is that Luther limited the divine authority of Scripture to that which "drives Christ" in Scripture. According to what drives Christ in the Scriptures, Luther wants everything else in the Scriptures to be judged and assessed as to whether it is divine truth or not. Luther assumed a "canon within the canon". According to this, Luther could not possibly have assumed that all words of Scripture were inspired by the Holy Spirit.⁹⁸⁶⁾ Two passages from Luther in particular are cited in support of this claim. First, the words from Luther's preface to the epistle of St. James and Jude:⁹⁸⁷⁾ "What Christ does not teach is not yet apostolic, even if St. Peter or Paul taught it. Again, what Christ preaches,

985) [L. u. W. 1886, p. 8.](#)

986) Cf. Dorner, [Geschichte der Prot. Theologie, p. 246](#), [Luthardt, Comp.¹⁰, p. 328](#). Seeberg, [Dogmengesch.² II, 288 ff.](#), [Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 269](#). even before that Hase, *Ev. Dogmatik*⁴, p. 394. [Grimm](#), *Institutio Theologiae Dogmaticae*, 2 p. 118, prints itself thus: *Quamvis [Lutherus] in controversiis de coena sacra agitatis litterae librorum sanctorum tenacissime inhaerendum esse doceret, aut ipsa singula Scripturae verba grandiloquis [!] laudibus efferret, alias tamen divinitatem sacrorum librorum vi et fervore reposuit, quo Christi meritum praedicaretur animisque commendaretur, atque ita velut canonem in canone constituit.* [[Google](#)] Somewhat different, though unclear, Gottlob Mayer, *Das religiöse Erkenntnisproblem*, 1897, I, 65 ff.

987) S. L. XIV, 129; Erl. 63, 156.

that would be apostolic if Judas, Annas, Pilate and Herod did the same." Then the 49th thesis from Luther's "Disputation on Faith" of 1535 is referred to, which reads thus:⁹⁸⁸⁾ "If our adversaries press on the Scriptures, we press on Christ against the Scriptures." In the original Latin the words are:⁹⁸⁹⁾ *Quodsi adversarii Scripturam urserint contra Christ, urgemus Christ contra Scripturam*. ["But if the adversaries pressed the Scriptures against Christ, let us urge Christ against the Scriptures."] These words — we go to this quotation first — sound strange, however. Viewed out of context, they really give the impression as if Luther opposed "Scripture" and "Christ" and wanted to use Christ, conceived as the content of Scripture, to correct the words of Scripture. But this view is only possible as long as we refrain from examining the context in which these words stand in Luther. Luther understands by the Scripture, which the adversaries urge and against which Luther urges Christ, the Scripture misused, misunderstood and misapplied by the adversaries (*adversarii*, papists). Luther thinks of the abuse of Scripture that the Romans do by introducing passages of Scripture that deal with the Law and human activity against Christ, that is, against the Gospel and faith. Thus Luther declares himself in the preceding theses 42-48. Luther reminds us that the papists introduce such scriptural passages as "Keep the commandments," "Thou shalt love God thy Lord," "Do this, and thou shalt live," and "Make thyself free from iniquity by doing good to the poor" against Christ and the faith, whereas they are to be understood for Lord, because the works mentioned can only take place in Christ, that is, they always presuppose Christ and faith in him. That Luther understands by Scripture the Scripture misunderstood by the papists, when he says that he urges Christ against Scripture, he also expressly declares in the 41st Thesis, which introduces this section. This Thesis reads: "One must understand the Scriptures not against, but for Christ, therefore one must either refer them to Christ or not consider them to be true Scripture."⁹⁹⁰⁾ By the way, it should be pointed out that it is a vain effort

 988) St. L. XIX, 1441. 989) Opp. v. a. IV, 381.

990) A. a. O., p. 381: *Et Scriptura est non contra, sed pro Christo intelligenda, ideo vel ad eum referenda, vel pro vera Scriptura non habenda*. ["And the Scripture is not to be understood against, but for Christ, and therefore either to be referred to him, or not to be regarded as true Scripture."]

on the part of modern theologians to seek cover for their position on Scripture behind Luther's alleged statement that only that in Scripture is true which "drives Christ". Because modern theologians almost unanimously deny the *satisfactio vicaria*, they do not teach at all what in Scripture "drives Christ." The Christ who is addressed in Scripture is always the Christ who reconciled the human world to God through his *satisfactio vicaria*. Also what Luther says in the theses following Thesis 49 has been used against the context to deny Luther "the strict conception of inspiration". Indeed, Luther elaborates there the thought, which he also expresses elsewhere, that all who have Christ and thus the Holy Spirit could also make a decalogue (*decalogum quendam*) and judge rightly of all things. Luther's address in Theses 66-67 is thus: "For if the heathen in their corrupt nature can make ordinances concerning God and be a law unto themselves, Rom. 2, how much more can Paul or a perfect Christian, full of the Holy Spirit, ordain a kind of decalogue and judge all things most rightly, even as all the prophets and fathers have spoken out of the very same Spirit of Christ all that we have in the Scriptures." ⁹⁹¹⁾ Because Luther here places "the perfect Christian" and "the Fathers" next to Paul and the Prophets, as speaking from one and the same Spirit, this has been and is cited as evidence that Luther assumes no specific, but only a gradual difference between the illumination that comes to all Christians and the inspiration of the writers of Holy Scriptures, and just as through illumination Christians do not become infallible, but remain capable of error, so this is also the case with the writers of Holy Scriptures. But here again it appears that all those who claim this to be Luther's view of Scripture have not read up on Luther. Immediately in the immediately following theses 58-60, Luther most decisively rejects the idea that faith in Christ enables and entitles a Christian or even a theologian to take a

 991) A. a. O., p. 382: *Si enim gentes in natura corrupta potuerunt de Deo statuere et. lex esse sibi ipsis (Com. 2), quanto magis Paulus et perfectus Christianus plenus Spiritu potest decalogum quendam ordinare et de omnibus rectissime iudicare, sicut omnes prophetae et patres eodem Spiritu Christi omnia sunt locuti, quae habentur in Scripturis.* [[Google](#)]

"free" position toward the words of Scripture, that is, not to consider himself bound by the words of Scripture because the words might contain an error. Luther draws the line between the inspired prophets and apostles on the one hand and all Christians and all later doctrines on the other hand very sharply at this point. He describes the sovereign position *vis-à-vis* the words of Scripture as the characteristic of the "fluttering spirits" (*vagi spiritus*), who cause division in the Church of God with their thoughts detached from the Word of God of the apostles and prophets. For the fact that we all, Christians and Christian theologians, are strictly bound to the writings of the prophets and apostles and must not allow ourselves to criticize the same, Luther refers to this difference between us and the apostles: The apostles were appointed by God as infallible teachers (*infallibiles doctores*) of the Church and could not err; with us, on the other hand, the possibility of error is present. The words of Luther with regard to this point leave nothing to be desired in terms of clarity. They read: "Since in the meantime we are of different spirits [although one and the same spirit dwells in us and in the apostles] and the flesh contends against the spirit, it is also necessary, because of the fluttering spirits, to adhere to the certain commandments and writings of the apostles (*adhaerere*), so that the church will not be divided. For we are not all apostles sent to us as infallible teachers by a fixed decision of God. Therefore, not they, but we, can err and fall short in the faith, because we are without such a decision." ⁹⁹²⁾

Finally, what stands with the first words of Luther: "What Christ does not teach is not yet apostolic, even if St. Peter or Paul taught it. Again, what Christ preaches would be apostolic if Judas, Annas, Pilate and Herod did it"? The form of the address already indicates that Luther is only talking about an assumed case, not a real one. Moreover, Luther still explicitly says,⁹⁹³⁾ that these apostles' sermon of Christ "can be imitated by no one,"

 992) *ibid.*, p. 382: *Tamen quia interea sumus inaequali spiritu, et caro adversatur, necesse est propter vagos spiritus certis mandatis et scriptis apostolorum adhaerere, ne laceretur ecclesia. Non enim sumus omnes apostoli, qui certo Dei decreto nobis sunt infallibiles doctores missi. Ideo non illi, sed nos, cum sine decreto tali simus, errare possumus et labi in fide.*
 [Google]

993) Erl. A. 5, 183.

neither Annas nor Caiaphas nor any man on earth".

Whatever else has been cited from Luther's writings as evidence of Luther's allegedly free position *vis-à-vis* Scripture has already been considered in the first part of this section, in the positive exposition of Luther's position *vis-à-vis* Scripture. To return briefly to the main points: That prophets and apostles do not always keep the "right order," indeed, that certain events are "mixed and mingled," that even in the words of the Lord's Supper no evangelist is in complete agreement with the other, etc., this Luther attributes, as we have seen, not to the "human frailty" of the writers of Scripture, but to the Holy Spirit, who willed it so. That Luther very often says that it does not much matter whether apparent contradictions can be harmonized or not, does not come from the fact that Luther considered the inerrancy of Scripture to be an adiaphoron, but from the fact that he is certain *a priori*, because of the inspiration of Scripture, that no error can be found in Scripture. "For this is certain, that the Scriptures do not lie." ⁹⁹⁴⁾ We also saw already that Luther in his *Chronikon* (1541 and 1545) declares the Holy Scriptures to be the only book in the world in which no chronological errors can be found, because he believes "that in the Scriptures the true God speaks."⁹⁹⁵⁾ From the *Chronikon* we add here that Luther prefers to accept an error "provided by writers [copyists]" rather than ascribing an error to the original text. We refer to these words in the *Chronikon*, p. 600: "The time of the judges from the death of Moses to Samuel is 357 years, Joshua included, as you see yourself. And the calculation is not missing, because in the first book of the kings, chap. 6, from the exodus to the temple of Solomonis 480 years are counted. Therefore, it is a manifest error in the Acts of the Apostles, ch. 13, by the mistake of the writers. The Latin translation is doubly wrong because it puts 460 years before the judges, during the distribution of the land, and forces the Lyra to go back to the years of Isaac. The Greek text, however, is corrupted by error of the scribes, which could easily have happened by writing τετρακοίοις for τριακοσίους." ⁹⁹⁶⁾

994) St. L. I, 714.

995) St. L. XIV, 491.

996) So also Beza; cf. L. u. W. 1886, p. 72, note. It is not a question here of whether other solutions to the difficulty are not possible and

However, one argument of those who would like to cover their free position on Scripture with Luther's authority should be taken into account, because it has been used again many times in recent times. The argument goes like this: Luther teaches that the Scriptures are understood only by the Holy Spirit and are "experienced within" as divine authority, therefore Luther could not possibly have assumed that the words of Scripture are the words of the Holy Spirit. Thus, among the evidence that Luther could not have held the "divinity" (*divinitatum*) of Holy Scriptures, Grimm also cited this: [*Lutherus*] *ad Scripturae mentem recte percipiendam Spiritus Sancti illuminationem opus esse censuit*. ["[Luther] considered that the illumination of the Holy Spirit was needed to correctly perceive the mind of the Scriptures."] ⁹⁹⁷⁾ Seeberg argues in the same way, however, when he says that ⁹⁹⁸⁾ Luther "did not base the recognition of the authority of Scripture on its church recognition, but on the experience of its truth." Seeberg quotes in the first place from the Erlangen Luther edition 28, 340 the words: "Everyone must believe that it is the Word of God and that he finds it to be true." Everyone will admit that this argument: Because the Holy Scriptures are understood or experienced only through the Holy Spirit, therefore the words of the Holy Scriptures cannot be inspired by the Holy Spirit, is completely beyond all logic. This is why Luther does not contrast the experience of the truth of Scripture with the inspiration of Scripture, but teaches "inspiration in the strictest sense" quite powerfully in the passage quoted by Seeberg. On the following page (p. 341) he calls it "blasphemy" if someone says: "If St. Matthew, Paul, Peter were also men, therefore their doctrine is also the doctrine of men. ... Now when you hear such deeply hardened and blinded blasphemers, turn away from them or stop your ears; they are not worthy to be spoken to." ... p. 342: "Another thing is, if man himself or if

closer, but of Luther's position with regard to the inerrancy of Scripture, which he firmly holds. Other solutions already in the Weimar and Hirschberg Bibles, also in Calov. Cf. the comments of Meyer, Lange-Schaff and Bloomfield. The latter, for example, after suggesting two possible solutions, writes: "Thus no error will attach to either passage [1 Kings 6:1 and Acts 13:20], and only *different modes of computation* be supposed to be adopted."

997) *Institutio*, p. 119. 998) *Dogmengesch.* ² II, 288.

God speaks through man. The apostle's address is commanded to them by God and confirmed and proven with great wonders." Furthermore, Luther says in this passage of the Scriptures that "therein is taught one and the same word of God from the beginning of the world. Finally, Luther says, p. 343: "We do not reproach the doctrine of men because men have said it, but because they are lies and blasphemies against the Scriptures, which, though they were written by men, were not written by or from men, but from God."

Thus it is clear that the newer theologians, who want to make Luther the patron of their free position on Scripture, partly did not read Luther at all, but copied collections of passages of others without examination, partly, if they really read Luther, were nevertheless incapable of understanding him, because their striving for Luther's protectorate was stronger than the sense for the historical truth. The former fact is particularly evident in Kahnis, for example. In his sharply polemical writing against Hengstenberg, "Zeugnis von den Grundwahrheiten," he claims that Luther took the same free position on Scripture as he (Kahnis) did. In justification he adds:⁹⁹⁹⁾ "Walch has compiled such sayings in his edition of Luther in the 14th volume. Those who wish to orient themselves with all speed should read the articles 'Inspiration' (by Dr. Tholuck) and 'New Testament Canon' (by Dr. Lnderer) in Herzog's Realenzyklopdie (VI. pp. 696 ff.; VII, pp. 295 ff.)." But Kahnis cannot deny himself to quote Luther from Tholuck's catalog, which seems to him to be the most conclusive. He chooses the "hay, straw and stubble" quotation, which, as we have seen and finally also Luthardt admits, is not about writing the Holy Scriptures at all. That Kahnis did not re-read Luther is evident from the fact that he also copied Tholuck's transcription errors.¹⁰⁰⁰⁾ In his Dogmatik, Kahnis offers us a lengthy catalog of judgments about Luther that are meant to prove his (Kahnis') proposition: "The standpoint of freedom is represented by Luther." But he adds in a note: "We do not prove these largely well-known sayings in detail by referring to the

 999) *Zeugnis von den Grundwahrheiten des Protestantismus gegen D. Hengstenberg*, [1862](#), [p. 85](#).

1000) The same occurred with Dr. Briggs in the lawsuit brought against him.

compilations cited." He names as such compilations those of Rudelbach, Tholuck and Köstlin. Of other newer theologians one must judge that they have really read Luther, but with the result that they read their position on Scripture into Luther without Luther having given them any cause to do so. In this regard we must again refer to Seeberg. Seeberg¹⁰⁰¹⁾ still refers especially to the Erlangen edition 30, 313 f., 331 for "censuring statements of Luther about individual thoughts in biblical books" and for Luther's "recognition of oversights." If we read the given passages, we do find that Luther says "that Matthew and Mark do not keep the strict order, but Luke does." But Luther does not "rebuke" Matthew and Mark, but adds that neither had "promised" to keep the chronological order. The situation is different with regard to Luke; Luke promised "that he would write from the beginning and in order; and he proves this with deed, for his Gospel is finely sequenced to the end. Seeberg read the predicate "reproving" into Luther's remarks. Luther finds it quite in order that Matthew and Mark follow an order other than chronological. Furthermore: In the other place, p. 331, Luther says that Matthew and Mark describe the Lord's Supper "imperfectly". But with the "imperfect" Luther does not think of an error, but of the fact that Matthew and Mark do not report "that Christ has called us [the church of all times] to do this and also to keep it", as Luke and Paul report the command words to the church of all times: "Do this in remembrance of me!"

8. Summary characterization of recent theology insofar as it denies the inspiration of Scripture. ^

In this section we do not bring anything new, but only summarize the main points of what has already been said repeatedly in other connections. Strahan, in Hastings¹⁰⁰²⁾, correctly defines the difference between the ancient and the modern theologians as far as their position on Holy Scriptures is concerned: In the article *De Scriptura Sacra*, the ancient theologians did not want to present their own

1001) Dogmengesch. ² II, 289.

1002) *Encyclopedia*. VII, 346.

view, but God's view and doctrine as revealed in His Word. The newer theologians, on the other hand, consider the opposite method to be the only correct one. The newer theologians, on the other hand, consider the opposite method to be the only correct one. They take a critical position toward the Scriptures. They do not want to teach what the doctrines say about themselves, but to present what is to be held of the doctrines according to the impression which they, the theologians, receive from the doctrines. On the basis of this procedure, which they call the "scientific" one, they come to the conclusion that the Scriptures are not the Word of God and that therefore the old doctrine of the inspiration of the Scriptures must be abandoned. Strahan literally says: "Protestant scholars of the present day, filled with the scientific spirit, have no *a priori* theory of the inspiration of the Bible." By the *a priori* theory rejected by Protestant scholars of our time, Strahan understands nothing more than that these theologians do not intend to teach from Scripture what Scripture says of itself. Thus Strahan declares himself when he goes on to say, "They do not open any book Old or New Testament with the feeling that they are bound to regard what it teaches as sacred and authoritative (*authoritative*). They accept only what they regard as irresistible logic of facts. They hold that if they are not convinced of the inspiration of the Bible by its [the Bible's] intrinsic value, they cannot be validly convinced of it in any other way. And finally, if they formulate a doctrine of the divine influence under which the Scriptures were written, it can only be an inference from the essential features which, after free and honest investigation, they cannot but acknowledge." ¹⁰⁰³⁾ The result of this method of ascertaining "the value of Scripture" is given by Strahan in the words, "The ancient doctrine of the equal and infallible inspiration of all

 1003) Strahan, op. cit.: "Protestant scholars of the present day, imbued with the scientific spirit, have no *a priori* theory of the inspiration of the Bible. ... They do not open any book of the Old or New Testament with the feeling that they are bound to regard its teaching as sacred and authoritative. They yield to nothing but what they regard as the irresistible logic of facts. They feel that, if they are not convinced of the inspiration of the Bible by its intrinsic merits, they cannot be legitimately convinced in any other way. And if in the end they formulate a doctrine of the divine influence under which the Scriptures were written, this is an inference from the characteristics which, after free and fair investigation, they are constrained to recognize."

parts of the Old Testament Scriptures ... are now rapidly disappearing among Protestants. In fact, there is no clear dividing line between what deserves and what does not deserve a place in Scripture." Strahan's report presents an equally unfavorable result with respect to the New Testament. He says, "The number of those passages in the Bible which cannot be regarded by Protestants as inspired in any true sense is not small." ¹⁰⁰⁴⁾

We will have to admit that in this description the position of modern theology to the Scriptures is correctly drawn in contrast to the old one. Theodor Kaftan can be considered as a representative. When he writes: ¹⁰⁰⁵⁾ "We are reality people," he means: What is authoritative for us is not what the doctrines teach of themselves, but what we accept as divine truth according to the impression that the doctrines make on us (insofar as the doctrines "prevail" with us). ¹⁰⁰⁶⁾ Theodor Kaftan also came to the conclusion in this way that verbal inspiration had "definitely been overcome". ¹⁰⁰⁷⁾

If we ask where it comes from that men, when they do not recognize the Scripture, which is nevertheless God's Word, as God's Word, the Scripture gives us clear information about it. Christ had to deal with people in John 8 who could not recognize His Word as the Word of the Son of God. Christ points to this fact when he says v. 27, "My Word hath no place in you," οὐ χωρεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν, and in the question v. 43, "Why then know ye not my language? For ye cannot hear my word." But this fact that the Jews do not know his language and cannot hear his word, he justifies with the other fact that they are not God's children, but stand outside the community of God. Positively and negatively Christ says v. 47: "He that is of God heareth the Word of God: therefore hear ye not, because ye are not of God." That "hear" here stands in the concise sense, not merely

 1004) ""To sum up: the old doctrine of the equal and infallible inspiration of every part of the Old Testament ... is now rapidly disappearing among Protestants. There is, in reality, no clear dividing-line between what is and what is not worthy of a place in the Scriptures." Also with regard to the New Testament, the result of the scientific investigation is: "There are not a few passages in the Bible which cannot be regarded by Protestants as in any true sense inspired." (op. cit.)

1005) *Modern Theology of the Old Faith* 2, p. 108.

1006) op. cit., p. 113. 1007) op. cit., p. 116.

the external hearing with the ears, but the "inward" hearing, the acceptance of the word as Word of God, results from the context. With the external ear the Jews heard Christ's word, but because they were not God's children, so they could not recognize Christ's word as God's word, but revolted against it. Christ here states the fact that the acceptance of His Word as the Word of God is limited to Christians. Likewise, Jn. 10:4, in the image of shepherd and flock, he says that his sheep follow him, "for they know his voice," οὐτ οἶδαν την φωνήν αὐτοῦ, and v. 26 he justifies the non-acceptance of his word on the part of the Jews by saying, "For you are not my sheep," οὐ γάρ ἐστε ἐκ τῶν προβάτων τῶν ἐμῶν. So also Luther remarks on John 8:¹⁰⁰⁸) "So then the Jews have no other excuse of their unbelief, except that they are not God's children." But why does Christ deny the Jews disputing with Him the sonship of God and thus also the ability to recognize His Word as the Word of God? The Jews based their sonship to God on their bodily descent from Abraham. They said: "Abraham is our father", Jn. 8:39. Thereby they revealed that they did not recognize Christ as the Savior of sinners, as the one who came to give his life for redemption (λύτρον) for many.¹⁰⁰⁹) Terminologically expressed: they did not recognize Christ in his *satisfactio vicaria*, although Christ precisely in his *satisfactio vicaria* was already so clearly painted before their eyes by Isaiah: " he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." ¹⁰¹⁰) Christ had also emphatically reminded them of this, John 8:24, saying, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." In short, the fact that the Jews did not recognize Christ's Word as the Word of God, but rejected it, was only a symptom of a deeper damage, namely the damage of not recognizing Christ in His substitutionary satisfaction. — In the same way, the fact that the newer theologians do not recognize the Scriptures (which are truly Christ's own Word given to us through His prophets and apostles) as the Word of God is only a symptom of the deeper damage, that they have almost universally abandoned the doctrine of the *satisfactio Christi vicaria*. Thus they live in their

1008) [St. L. XI, 568](#).

1009) Matt. 20:28.

1010) Is. 53:5.

theological thought outside the Christian sphere. Without "cost", that is, without Christ's *satisfactio vicaria*, doctrine and faith remain of the Turk and Jewish, as Luther says in his powerful sermon on John 3:16-21). "I have often said before that faith alone is not enough to God, but the cost must also be there. The Turk and Jew also believe in God, but without means and cost." "*Iustus fide vivet, sed fide Crucifixi.*" ¹⁰¹²⁾ Where the *satisfactio vicaria* is not taught and believed, there is not the Holy Spirit, because only through this doctrine and faith in this doctrine does the Holy Spirit come into the heart, ¹⁰¹³⁾ the Spirit of truth, who teaches his word, which he spoke through the prophets and apostles, ¹⁰¹⁴⁾ also to be known as his word. Therefore, modern theology must return to the scriptural doctrine of *satisfactio vicaria*. Without this return, it will not find the Christian position on Scripture, but will continue to contradict Christ and His apostles to their faces in its judgment of Scripture. That we do not deny the Christian faith absolutely to everyone who criticizes the *satisfactio vicaria* from the safety of the cathedra and in "scientific" writings comes from the fact that we like to think of a possible "double-entry bookkeeping" or inconsistency, according to which someone does not consider true in his heart and before God what he advocates in *disputationibus*, as Luther and Chemnitz express themselves.

The characteristic of modern theology, in so far as it combats the inspiration of Scripture, further includes the following: It is in the nature of things, and is also generally admitted, that truth cannot be combated with truth, but only with untruth. Now, because the inspiration of Scripture is truth, all who combat this truth are in the position of having to deal with untruth. This becomes clear when we examine the quality of the arguments with which they wage war against inspiration. These arguments can be adequately described as a large collection of historical and logical falsehoods. We recall here what has already been proven earlier.

First of all, in order to reject historical untruths: Almost all deniers of inspiration claim that only the later dogmatists invented the "artificial theory" according to which all the

1011) [St. L. XI, 1085](#). 1012) [St. L. XXI b, 1514](#).

1013) Gal. 3:2; Jn. 16:14.

1014) 1 Petr. 1:10-12.

words of Scripture were God's infallible Word ("identification of Scripture and Word of God"), while Luther maintained the position of freedom towards Scripture. The historical truth is, as we saw, that Luther presents the doctrine we find in the dogmatists in all details and much more powerfully than the dogmatists were able to do. If we look further at the quotations from Luther by which the attempt is made to gain from Luther a protector of the modern-theological position on Scripture, they are passages which either do not deal with inspiration at all (as the "hay, straw, and stubble" quotation), or they are passages in which, as soon as one reads them up, nothing of what is ascribed to Luther stands. Here belong the passages which are supposed to show that Luther admitted contradictions etc. in the Scriptures. — In order to discredit the verbal inspiration before the public, the assertion is made almost throughout that the dogmatists had quite "mechanical ideas" about the inspiration of Scripture. The historical truth is that the dogmatists expressly repudiate all mechanical conceptions, teaching that the Holy Spirit *suavi operatione* so acted upon the minds and wills of the sacred writers that they wrote *volentes scientesque*, not *citra et contra voluntatem suam, inscii ac inviti*. — To discredit verbal inspiration, it is further claimed that the representatives of verbal inspiration regarded Holy Scriptures as a "code of laws fallen from heaven," as a "paper pope," etc., whereas no such thing ever occurred to the representatives of verbal inspiration. Rather, they teach very clearly that the Holy Scriptures did not fall from heaven, but were written here on earth by men and in human language by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Nor do the representatives of verbal inspiration regard Scripture as a "paper pope" to which one submits without inner conviction, but to them Scripture is a book which — precisely because it is God's own Word — procures for itself faith and *eo ipso* willing and joyful recognition through the action of the Holy Spirit associated with it.

It is also clear that modern theology, in its zeal to fight against inspiration, moves in alogisms, paralogisms, self-contradictions, that is, in logical falsehoods. A complete absence of logic is present, as we have seen, when it is objected against inspiration: the different style

in the individual books of Scripture, the calling of the writers to historical research or the communication of facts by other persons, the use of writings and documents already available, the presence of different readings in the copies of the Bible. Even the fact that the holy writers were and remained sinners does not contradict inspiration, but rather demands it on the premise that the Church is not built on fallible human word, but on the foundation of the apostles and prophets until the Last Day. A paralogism is also present when Luther's "free judgments" on the Antilegomena, which he does not count as part of the established canon with the ancient Church, are cited as proof that he took a "free position" on Scripture in general, that is, also on the Homologumena, and questioned their inspiration. — That the opponents of the truth of inspiration come into the position of becoming logically untrue, finally also appears from the self-contradictions which we perceive in them. On the one hand, we encounter the assertion that in the presentation of Christian doctrine one must not start from the "word revelation," that is, from the Holy Scriptures, but from the "faith" in the "deed revelation" or "salvation facts" which the Christian or the theologian carries within himself. On the other hand, it is admitted by the same persons, and rightly so, that without God's revelation in the Word, God's "revelation in deed" remains an "ununderstood hieroglyph." The latter statement completely cancels out the former, because it states that without God's revelation in the Word, there is no belief in the "revelation of deed" to start from at all. Further: Theodor Kaftan is so zealous in combating verbal inspiration that he also asserts two things that dismiss each other. On the one hand, he claims that it is not hidden from any theologian "that there is no fixed text of Holy Scriptures" because the number of different readings is "legion."¹⁰¹⁵⁾ On the other hand, he claims that he (Kaftan) can determine on the basis of Scripture what in Scripture is objective Word of God and what is not.¹⁰¹⁶⁾ That this is impossible on the premise "that there is no fixed text of Holy Scriptures" has escaped his perception.

1015) *Modern Theology of the Old Faith* 2, p. 96 f.

1016) op. cit., p. 113.

In the foregoing we have pronounced harsh judgments on the deniers of the inspiration of Holy Scriptures. But we do not forget — to use a coarse expression of Luther — to "take ourselves by the nose" and to accuse ourselves that we do not always "with right seriousness" take the Scriptures for the Word of God. We will have to confess that we do not consider every time we open our Bible that the Bible is the book in which not men but the great God Himself, the Creator and Lord of the universe, speaks to us in matters of our salvation. We will also have to confess that we do not read the Holy Scriptures as diligently as befits those who are convinced by God's grace that the Holy Scriptures are "God's letter" to us men. Luther says repeatedly and in alternate expressions:¹⁰¹⁷⁾) Lords' and princes' letters should be read two and three times, for they are written thoughtfully. But truly, the letters of our Lord God — for that is what St. Gregory calls the Holy Scriptures — should be read three times, seven times, even seventy times seven times, or, that I may say more, infinitely. But we don't do it. I don't do it myself, that's why I'm sorry for myself, *ego odi me*; but when I get over it and read it, I find strength, I feel that it is a strength, and that it is not a [mere] history.

9. The consequences of denying the inspiration of Holy Scriptures. [^]

Although the older modern theologians, such as Kahnis, Luthardt, and others, denied the inspiration and therefore the infallibility of Scripture, they declared that besides this the Protestant principle of the sole authority of Scripture must be adhered to. Nothing should be placed above Scripture as the norm in matters of Christian doctrine. Scripture must remain the "ultimate norm" of Christian knowledge and doctrine. Thus Kahnis wrote:¹⁰¹⁸⁾ "Protestantism stands and falls with the principle of the sole authority of Scripture. Independent of this principle is the doctrine of inspiration of the dogmatists." They were countered at the time from several quarters on this side and on the other side of the ocean that there was self-deception here. If the

1017) [St. L. 1. 1055](#); [XXII, 544. 1069.](#)

1018) [Der innere Gang des deutschen Protestantismus 2, p. 241](#); in Baier-Walther [1, 103.](#)

Protestant theologian, who according to his "consciousness of faith" or "Christian ego" has to make the distinction between truth and error, is necessarily made the last and highest norm within Protestantism and placed above the Scriptures. This degradation of Scripture to a *norma normata* was then also soon carried out quite universally and declared to be the only correct thing. Thus, for example, Seeberg, claiming to have used the "testimony of Christ and his salvation" in Scripture as a correction of the Scriptural word, and even ascribing this procedure to Luther, writes: "Considered in this way, Scripture must not be coordinated to itself as the second principle¹⁰¹⁹⁾ of Protestantism to justifying faith. The driving principle is faith. And in that only faith understands Scripture and it is there only for faith, it [Scripture] is to be subordinated to it [faith] as the principle."¹⁰²⁰⁾ We see here what Protestantism becomes when it abandons the truth that Scripture is God's infallible Word. Protestantism's principle "of the sole authority of Scripture" is completely abandoned. The divine order in the Church is turned upside down. According to this, the faith of Christians is no longer based on Scripture, on the word of the apostles and prophets, but vice versa: Scripture, the word of the apostles and prophets, is based on faith. Protestantism has degenerated into the most consummate enthusiasm, such as we encounter in Quakerism. We point back to Robert Barclay, the Quaker dogmatist, who also says of the Scriptures that they are not to be regarded as an "adequate first rule of faith and life," but only as "a second rule subordinate to the Spirit" (*regula secundaria, subordinata Spiritui*). The "last refuge" and "the certain and immovable foundation of the whole Christian faith" is not Holy Scriptures, but the inner, immediate revelation of the Holy Spirit, which carries its certainty in itself.¹⁰²¹⁾

With Barclay, Seeberg agrees completely in the words quoted above. He only sets for Barclay's "inner,

1019) Highlighted by Seeberg himself.

1020) Highlighted by us.

1021) Note 907, p. 330.

immediate revelation", to which the Scriptures are "subordinated" as the first rule, the "faith" as the second rule. Nowadays it is no longer quite fashionable to address "inner, immediate revelations". And with Seeberg agrees in principle and mostly in expression the whole of modern theology, in so far as it denies the inspiration of Scripture. It is not Scripture that is the source and norm of faith, but faith that is the source and norm of theology.

With the denial of the inspiration of the Scriptures, the situation is as follows: 1. we renounce the knowledge of the Christian truth, and in place of the knowledge of the Christian truth, human imagination and ignorance takes its place. For if any man teach otherwise, and abide not in the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ, which we have in the word of his prophets and apostles, he is darkened, and knoweth nothing, but is sick (νοσών, lieth down sick) in questions and strife of words.¹⁰²²⁾ If, in denying the inspiration of Scripture, we are not wholly lost in human opinion and ignorance, it is because we still hold matters of the truth revealed in Scripture in contradiction with our principally false position. We renounce faith in the Christian sense, because Christian faith always takes place only *vis-a-vis* the Word of God. It comes from the sermon, but the sermon comes from the Word of God.¹⁰²³⁾ 3) We renounce prayer because Christian prayer presupposes abiding in Christ's words. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."¹⁰²⁴⁾ 4. We renounce the overcoming of death. "If any man keep my word, he shall not see death for ever."¹⁰²⁵⁾ 5, We renounce the means of mission of the Christian Church, which is to teach the nations all that Christ commanded His Church to teach. He who does not bring the doctrines of Christ shall not be considered or treated as a Christian teacher.¹⁰²⁶⁾ 6. We renounce the right Christian unity of the Church, which

1022) 1 Tim. 6:3-4; Jn. 8:31-32; 17:20.

1023) Rom. 10:17. 1024) Jn. 15:7.

1025) Jn. 8:51. 1026) Matt. 28:19; 2 Jn. 9-10.

consists in faith in Christ's Word.¹⁰²⁷⁾ Luther.¹⁰²⁸⁾ "The word and doctrines shall make Christian unity and fellowship." 7 We abstain from intercourse with God because God remains invisible to us men in this life and approaches us only through the means of His Word. Those who do not merely intercourse with God through the means of His Word, perverse only with their own human thoughts, with "projections of their human ego."¹⁰²⁹⁾ 8. We turn the Christian religion, which is a wisdom from above, a σοφία θεοῦ, which never came into a man's heart, a secret, which was concealed from the world, but now revealed through the prophets' writings by command of the eternal God¹⁰³⁰⁾ — we turn this wisdom from above into a wisdom from below, by wanting to let men decide what in the writings of the apostles and prophets is God's truth and what is not, what in it is to be accepted and what in it is to be rejected. We break off the divine ladder to heaven, the bridge and the footbridge that binds heaven to this earth. In short, everything that makes us Christians and sustains us as Christians we abandon in principle when we fall away from the truth that the Holy Scriptures are God's own infallible Word by inspiration.

Walther therefore wrote in 1886, one year before his death, on the occasion of the attempt of modern theologians to make Luther the protector of their "free" position on the Scriptures, among other things as follows:¹⁰³¹⁾ "Supposing Luther had really considered the Bible to be a book afflicted with all kinds of errors, from which only the scholars could peel out the divine core of truth, then only Luther would be taken away from the Bible Christians. The most frightening thing is that the modern believers and modern Lutheran theologians (as it seems almost without exception!) declare it to be a fact, which can no longer be denied, that the Scriptures, besides the "own good thoughts" of their authors, also contain "hay, straw and stubble", which "consumes the fire". That stand robs the Bible Christians not only of a man whom they had heretofore regarded as a faithful witness of the truth, but the Bible Christians are deprived of their very Bible, their lamp and light on their

1027) Jn. 8:31-32; Matt. 28:19; Eph. 4:5.

1028) [St. L. IX, 831](#). 1029) 1 Cor. 13:12; 1 Tim. 6:3-4.

1030) 1 Cor. 2:9; Rom. 16:25-26 1031) [L. and W. 1886, p. 76 f.](#)

their way to eternity, their rod and staff in the dark valley of affliction, in short, God's Word and with it their comfort in the anguish of sin, their hope in the night of their hour of death, taken away! ... We must say of the so-called 'divine-human Scripture' as it is now understood and taught by modern faithful theology: Beware, beware, I say, of this 'divine-human Scripture'! It is the devil's mask, because it finally leads to such a Bible, according to which I would not like to be a Bible Christian, namely that the Bible henceforth is no more than another good book, which I must read with constant serious examination, in order not to fall into error. For if I believe that the Bible also contains errors, it is no longer a touchstone for me, but needs one itself. In short, it is unspeakable what the devil seeks with the 'divine-human Scripture'."

10. The characteristics of the Holy Scriptures. [^](#)

Because the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God by inspiration, they naturally also have *divine attributes* (*affectiones vere divinae*), namely divine authority (*auctoritas divina*), divine power (*efficacia divina*), perfection (*perfectio*) and clarity (*perspicuitas sive claritas*). It goes without saying that modern theology, along with the inspiration of Scripture, also expounds its divine attributes, or, as it is often euphemistically expressed, "limits" them.¹⁰³²⁾

The Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures. [^](#)

The divine authority of Scripture consists in the fact that faith and obedience are due to it, as to God Himself, with respect to everything it says. We have already seen that this is the position that Christ and the apostles take with respect to the Scriptures of the Old Testament.¹⁰³³⁾ This is the position that Christ and the apostles demand for their own word in the New Testament as well.¹⁰³⁴⁾ He who rejects or even criticizes the Scriptures offends God's majesty. He commits a *crimen laesae maiestatis divinae*. Hence Christ's warning, "The word which I have spoken shall judge him at the last day."¹⁰³⁵⁾

1032) Cf. Zöckler, *Handbuch d. theol. Wissenschaften* 2 III, 151.

1033) Jn. 10:35; Luke 24:25-27, 44-47; 2 Tim. 3:16. 17; Matt. 4:4-7.

1034) Jn. 8:31-32; 1 Cor. 14:37-38; Gal. 1:8.

1035) Jn. 12:48.

This divine authority of Scripture is absolute, that is, it is not founded in the personal reputation of the writers, nor in the testimony that individuals or a whole number of individuals or even the whole Church have given or are giving to Scripture. The divine authority of Scripture is founded solely in its nature, that is, in its theopneusty. It is a proper theological axiom: "Scripture is ἀντόπιστος because θεόπνευστος ["God-breathed", ¹⁰³⁶]

But if we ask how the divine authority of Scripture is known by us men, or how Scripture becomes a divine authority for us, we distinguish between Christian certainty (*fides divina*) and natural or scientific certainty (*fides humana*).

Christian certainty arises only through the self-attestation of Scripture. This self-affirmation is accomplished by the fact that the word of Scripture, independent of human evidence, works faith in itself by the power of the Holy Spirit who is active in it, and provides *eo ipso* recognition. This is clearly taught 1 Cor. 2:4-6, where the apostle Paul reminds the Corinthians how it came to be with them that they believed the divine doctrine (τὸ μαρτύρων τοῦ Θεοῦ) which they had heard from him. He first says in negative clause, "My word and sermon was not [accomplished] ἐν πειθοῖς σοφίας λόγοις [for wisdom's sake], then adds in positive clause: ἀλλ' ἐν αποδείξει πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως ["but in proof of spirit and power"] and finally points out the purpose why he used this method, according to which he dispensed with human evidence: The purpose was: ἵνα πίστις ὑμῶν μὴ ἡ (having its continuance or reason) ἐν σοφίᾳ ἀνθρώπων, ἀλλ' ἐν δυνάμει Θεοῦ ["in the wisdom of men, but in virtue of the power of God."]. The same thing Christ says of His preaching of the Word in the days of the flesh, John 7:17: "If any man will do the will of [the Father] [namely, hear Christ's Word and believe, John 6:40], he shall know (γινώσεται) whether this doctrine be of God, or whether I speak of myself." We can also express this important truth in this way: The Word of Scripture, because

1036) [Baier-Walther 1, 119](#): *Scripturae Sacrae auctoritas in ipsa Θεοπνευστία seu dependentia a Deo, tanquam ab Auctore, ... fundatur. Non autem a causa minus principali, sicut nec aliae scripturae ab amanuensibus ... auctoritatem habent. Atque inde patet, quod Scriptura Sacra nec ab ecclesia habeat auctoritatem, quippe quae illius auctor et causa efficiens non fuit.* [[Google](#)]

it is God's Word, is an object of knowledge that creates its own organ of knowledge, faith, and thereby testifies to itself as divine authority. This is the so-called *testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum*. The testimony of the Holy Spirit is not present only when a special sensation of the divinity of Scripture, entering also into sensual feeling, has arisen in man, but is already present in and with the faith in the Word of Scripture wrought by the Holy Spirit. By the fact that the Holy Spirit produces faith in the Word of Scripture, which faith has its seat in the spirit or in the inner being of man, the Holy Spirit bears witness to the divinity of the Word of Scripture in the spirit of man. According to 1 John 5:9, 10, he who believes God's testimony of His Son has God's testimony in him (εν αυτω). When it is further said 1 Thess. 2:13 states: εδέξασθε ον λόγον ανθρώπων, αλλά καθώς έστιν άληθώς, λόγον θεοῦ, it is said, that the Thessalonians already by accepting the Word, that is, by believing in the Word, became acquainted with the divinity of the Word. Therefore it also comes that the Scripture calls the faith in God's Word a sealing or confirmation of the truthfulness of God, Jn. 3:33: ο λαβών αυτοῦ [Christ's] την μαρτυρίαν, εοφράγιεν δι ο θεός άληθής έστιν, and of unbelief toward the testimony of God says that it makes God a liar, ο μη πιστεύων τῷ θεῷ ψεύστην πεποίηκεν αυτόν, δι ον πεπίστευκεν εις την μαρτυρίαν ην μεμαρτύρηκεν ο θεός περί τον νίον αυτου.¹⁰³⁷⁾ This truth, that Christian certainty of the divinity of Scripture arises from the self-attestation of Scripture, is of the greatest practical importance. If doubts about the divinity of Scripture come to Christians, they must deal with Scripture, that is, read the word of Scripture, listen to it, ponder it in the spirit, and thus let it affect them. Then, through the self-testimony of Scripture, through the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum*, the doubts disappear.

Of course, objections are now raised against this self-affirmation of Scripture. Rome, in the interest of the Pope's supremacy over Scripture, and newer theologians, in the interest of the detachment of faith from Scripture, speak of a circular argument (*idem per idem*).¹⁰³⁸⁾ But

1037) 1 John 5:10.

1038) Cf. above under the section "Theology and Certainty," p. 131.

the objection is not valid. We have to do here with the generally recognized way that we men become certain of a thing by perception. Whoever seriously denies this way of becoming certain has sunk into the abyss of agnosticism. Now faith in the Word of Scripture is nothing more and nothing less than the perception of this Word as what it is, as the Word of God, brought about by the Word of Scripture itself through the action of the Holy Spirit. Philippi reminds us,¹⁰³⁹⁾ that Strauß (Glaubenslehre I, 136, cf. 345) calls the doctrine of the *testimonium internum Spiritus Sancti* for the Word of God "the Achilles' heel of the Protestant system" and also speaks of a circular argument. But Philippi adds: "This is just as if the blind man blames the sighted man for a circular argument, because he claims that the sun shines, since he sees in its light." Like Philippi, the old Lutheran theologians speak. Gottfried Hofmann († 1728) writes: *Quemadmodum principia prima per se nota sunt et suamet luce radiant, et in naturalibus lumen testatur de se ipso nec opus habet alio lumine, ita et Spiritus Sancti testimonium non opus habet alio testimonio, sed suamet luce radiat et se divinum esse efficacia sua ac virtute qua gaudet divina abunde testatur, licet hoc alteri persuaderi non possit, nisi et ipse Scripturam Sacram attente legat atque ita testimonii huius interni particeps fiat.*¹⁰⁴⁰⁾ [[Google](#)]

As certain as it is that Christian certainty (*fides divina*) of the divinity of Scriptures arises only by way of self-attestation, it cannot be denied, on the other hand, that there is also a natural-reasonable conviction (*fides humana* or "scientific certainty") of the divinity of Holy Scriptures, based on proofs of reason. Our ancient theologians call these proofs of reason *argumenta, quae divinam Scripturae originem humana fide agnoscendam seu credibilem declarant*. ["arguments which declare the divine origin of the Scriptures to be recognized or believed by human faith"]¹⁰⁴¹⁾ All works of God bear the divine stamp, recognizable to human reason, by which they are distinguished from the creations of human hands, from human products. There is hardly anyone in danger of confusing a made flower with a natural flower. Now the Holy Scriptures are a work of God, "God's book", like the Creation

1039) *Doctrine of Faith* 3 1, 136.

1040) *Synopsis Theologiae Purioris*, p. 86. 1041) [Baier-Walther 1, 121](#).

of the world. And as the naturally rational contemplation of the Creation reveals God as its Creator,¹⁰⁴²⁾ so also the naturally rational contemplation of the Holy Scriptures usually already points to God as its Author. If we compare the Holy Scriptures according to content and style with other religious writings, e.g. with the Koran, with the religious books of the Orient etc.,¹⁰⁴³⁾ and the victorious spread of Christianity, although its doctrine is an offence to the Jews and a folly to the Greeks,¹⁰⁴⁴⁾ and the unique effects of the religion taught in the Scriptures, both among individuals¹⁰⁴⁵⁾ and among whole peoples¹⁰⁴⁶⁾ : rational reason cannot fail to conclude that the Scriptures are divine, and that it is more reasonable to accept the divinity of the Holy Scriptures than to reject them. This is the field of apologetics.¹⁰⁴⁷⁾

As for the value of arguments that convey a human or scientific conviction of the divinity of Scripture, there is a double extreme to be avoided: overestimation and underestimation. Overestimation would be present if we wanted to think that someone could become a Christian by reasoning arguments. Becoming a Christian happens until the Last Day and

1042) Rom. 1:18 ff.

1043) A longer quotation from the Koran in [Baier-Walther I, 130](#) f. [Max Müller](#) [*sic*: [Monier Monier-Williams](#)] in the paper on the specific content of the "holy books of the East" given above, p. 15 f.: "One refrain through all — salvation by works ... Our own holy Bible, our sacred Book of the East, is from beginning to end a protest against this doctrine. It contains that faithful saying, worthy to be received by all men, women, and children, and not merely by us Christians—that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." [**Wrong name! It was actually [Monier Monier-Williams](#), not Max Müller — see [this blog post](#)**] On the style or form of expression: [Luthardt, Apol. Vorträge I, 208](#) f., Rousseau and Pascal (in Luthardt, op. cit., pp. 263. 265).

1044) Baier-Walther [I, 129](#); [Luthardt, op. cit.](#)

1045) The certainty of being reconciled with God through faith in Christ's *satisfactio vicaria*, the holy walk, patience in suffering, the joy of dying. [Max Müller](#) [*sic*: [Monier Monier-Williams](#)] in the quote just given: "Let us teach Hindus, Buddhists, Mohammedans, that there is only one sacred Book of the East that can be their mainstay in that awful hour when they pass all alone into the unseen world."

1046) Christianity concededly civilizes the fastest and safest.

1047) Cf. [Synodal Report of the Western District of the Missouri Synod of 1865](#). A detailed compilation of the arguments relating to *fides humana*: [Baier-Walther I, 121-131](#).

in every single case only one way, the way of *contritio* and *fides*, namely by the fact that a man experiences the divine judgment of condemnation because of his sins (*terrores conscientiae*) through the law of God testified in the Scriptures and then believes the forgiveness of his sins through the Gospel testified in the Scriptures. As Christ teaches this way of the coming of his kingdom in the world, when he is called to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins among all nations in his name.¹⁰⁴⁸⁾ Only when someone has become a Christian in this way, a sheep of Christ's flock, and the Holy Spirit has entered his heart through faith in the forgiveness of sins, does he recognize the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God, as the voice of his good Shepherd; in other words, he has the Christian certainty, the *fides divina*, the *testimonium internum Spiritus Sancti* of the divinity of the Holy Scriptures, as we have already seen.¹⁰⁴⁹⁾ An underestimation of the arguments that can generate human faith (*fidem humanam*) would be present if we wanted to dismiss them as totally worthless. Christ and the apostles also used them in passing.¹⁰⁵⁰⁾ They serve to reject the frivolous judgments that unbelief allows itself to make about the Scriptures. Reasonable grounds can also be usefully presented to Christians challenged with doubts concerning the divine nature of Scripture. After all, these doubts stem from the unbelieving flesh of Christians, and through proofs of reason the flesh of Christians is also outwardly bridled and restrained.¹⁰⁵¹⁾ Proofs of reason, historical proofs, etc., can also serve conversion insofar as they may become an inducement for those outside the church to read and hear God's Word for themselves and thus become faithful to the Word through the action of the Holy Spirit in the Word. But we must not think that the presentation of

1048) Luke 24:46. 47; Mark. 1:15.

1049) Jn. 8:37. 43. 47.

1050) To the Sadducees, who declared the resurrection of the dead impossible, Christ points not only to the Scriptures, but also to the omnipotence of God, which is already recognized by natural reason. He declares that the doctrine of the Sadducees contradicts not only the Scriptures but also reason. Paul holds the same against the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 15:34. Peter also mentions a reason on the first day of Pentecost, Acts 2:15. Paul refers to Acts 17:28 to the Athenians about "some poets".

1051) Gerhard, *L. De Scriptura S.*, § 20: *Si fideles in tentationibus de auctoritate Scripturae dubitare incipiunt, perinde cum illis agendum atque cum iis, qui negant. Est enim dubitatio negationi proxima.* ["If in temptations the faithful begin to doubt the authority of the Scriptures, the same should be done with them and with those who deny. For doubt is close to negation."]

proofs of reason is a necessary preliminary to the proclamation of the Word of God. The claim that the "Christian certainty of truth" is conditioned by mediation with "other possessions of truth of mankind" belongs to the basic error of modern theologians. The assertion that the "Christian certainty of truth" is conditioned by the mediation with the "other truth possession of mankind" belongs to the basic error of modern theologians. As Eduard König rightly points out, this is based on the erroneous opinion that "Holy Scriptures are not capable of acquiring an authority which can be believed with conviction for its statements." ¹⁰⁵²⁾ On the contrary, it must be stated that the self-attestation of Scripture as the Word of God is completely independent of all proofs of reason and of all human testimony, whether from individual persons or from the "Church. The objection that the self-attestation of Scripture extends only to its content, not to its words, has already been repeatedly proven to be contrary to Scripture and senseless.¹⁰⁵³⁾

The question has now been raised again and again as to how someone can tell whether he has the Christian faith wrought by the Holy Spirit or only a human conviction of the divinity of the Holy Scriptures. Christians also ask themselves this question. It must be admitted that deception is possible here. Some who do not have the testimony of the Holy Spirit think they have it, while others who think they do not have it actually do. So: Who has the testimony of the Holy Spirit, and who does not have it? 1. Since, according to Scripture, the testimony of the Holy Spirit is not without the word of the apostles and prophets, but only through it, all judgments of Scripture in those who actually disengage themselves from the word of Scripture are not the testimony of the Holy Spirit, but pure human invention and imagination. 2. The inner testimony of the Holy Spirit to the divinity of the Scriptures is also lacking in all those who only accept the Scriptures as the Word of God on the basis of rational evidence, or who, on the basis of human authority, such as the authority of the pastor or parents or other men, hold that the Scriptures are the Word of God. 3. Consequently, those who deny the vicarious satisfaction of Christ cannot have the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti* of the divinity of the Holy Scriptures,

1052) *Der Glaubensakt des Christen* 1891, p. 118 f.

1053) Cf. p. 80 f. 262 ff.

because the Christian faith is *fides Christi crucifixi* and the Holy Spirit enters the heart of a man only with this faith and enables him to make a correct judgment about divine things, thus also about the Holy Scriptures. On this point [Philippi](#) also says:¹⁰⁵⁴⁾ "Only faith in the full sacrifice made on the cross in humiliation for our sins, which is our Lord and our God, puts us anew into actual fellowship with God, brings the spirit of filiation and the certainty of inheritance, and fills us with powers of eternal life. Therefore also only the [Church](#), which teaches the righteousness that is valid before God and the finding of life by faith alone in the blood of reconciliation, has recourse to the testimony of the Holy Spirit to the [Word of God](#) and to the unconditional and exclusive authority of this Word infallibly sealed in the Spirit." The practice of both our missionaries in the heathen countries and our traveling preachers and our pastors in city and state institutions corresponds to this. They do not begin with rational proofs of the divinity of the Holy Scriptures, but preach repentance and forgiveness "into the multitude." Once faith in *Christ crucifixum* has been established, there is no need for faith in the divinity of the Holy Scriptures. Here also settles the special question with regard to [Johann David Michaelis](#) († 1791), who almost gained a world-wide reputation in theological circles by confessing that in his whole life he had never felt a testimony of the Holy Spirit to the divinity of Scripture. Whether this covers Michaelis' case "in his whole life" we leave unexamined here. But that he did not and could not have the testimony of the Holy Spirit in his later life is explained by the fact that he denied the Scriptural doctrine of the *satisfactio Christi vicaria* and based the divine forgiveness of sins on the moral correction of man. The Holy Spirit does not confirm pagan doctrines of works, but testifies outwardly in the Word of Scripture and inwardly in the heart through the effect of faith in the Word of Scripture that Christ died for our sins according to Scripture.¹⁰⁵⁵⁾

1054) *Glaubenslehre* [3 I, 135](#).

1055) About Michaelis RE.² IX, 746 ff; Meusel IV, 597. The case of Michaelis and comrades is also treated by Andreas Knös in *Inst. Theol. Practicae. Holmiae* 1768, p. 66-71, cited in [Baier-Walther I, 136](#).

4. But the inner witness of the Holy Spirit is given to everyone who believes the Scriptures for their own sake, that is, who believes what the Scriptures say to be divine truth because they say it. And that is, faith itself is the witness of the Holy Spirit. This is the point at which the deception occurs, that such in whom the testimony of the Holy Spirit is actually present, miss it in themselves and groan for it. As those err who think they have the testimony of the Holy Spirit without faith in the external Word, so do dear Christians err who believe the Scriptures, think what the Scriptures say to be incontrovertible truth, but yet do not think they have the testimony of the Holy Spirit to the divinity of the Scriptures. Their error consists in the fact that they do not identify faith in the Holy Scriptures and the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit to the divinity of the Scriptures, whereas both must be identified because they factually coincide. The matter stands like this: No man believes the Word of God of himself. The natural man believes neither the terrible judgment of the law, as it is in the words of Scripture, nor the comforting judgment of the gospel of the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake alone, as it is also in the words of Scripture. In particular, the word of the gospel about the forgiveness of sins *propter Christ crucifixum* is an offence and foolishness to every natural man. But if a man believes both the word of Scripture which promises him eternal damnation and the word of Scripture which promises him the forgiveness of his sins for the sake of Christ crucified, this is merely the effect of the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit has given him inward testimony, through the effect of faith in the heart, that the word of Scripture is not foolishness but divine truth. Expressed still differently, the testimony of the Holy Spirit, which is objective in the Word of Scripture, that is, apart from us, becomes inward testimony of the Holy Spirit to us through the Holy Spirit's working in our hearts to the objective testimony in the Word of Scripture. This, as we already saw, is explicitly taught in 1 John 5:9, 10. V. 9 is the address of God's testimony, which God has begotten of His Son, that is, of the Word of God. But in v. 10 the apostle adds: "Whoever believes in the Son of God" — namely on the basis of the testimony that God has testified of

his son — "he has such a testimony with him, Greek: εν εαυτω, in himself, in his inside.¹⁰⁵⁶⁾ According to Scripture, then, the Holy Spirit's testimony to the divinity of Scripture does not exist only when it is expressed in sensual feeling. This sensual feeling exists. Among Christians there are days and hours, sometimes even only moments, in which they feel the truth, the majesty, the glory, the divinity of Scripture so strongly that they are overwhelmed, as it were, by this sensation even in feeling. But it is not only in these special times of joy that the witness of the Holy Spirit to the divine nature of Scripture is present. Rather, this special sensation entering into feeling belongs, precisely speaking, to the consequences and fruits of faith in the truth of the Scriptural word, and in this respect to the external testimony of the Holy Spirit (*testimonium Spiritus Sancti externum*). The inner testimony of the Holy Spirit, in the first and proper sense, coincides according to 1 John 5:9-10 with the faith in the scriptural word worked by the Holy Spirit. It is also present when faith does not express itself in feeling, but the heart nevertheless remains attached to the word of Scripture, desires it and reaches out for it in an inner longing. Luther says¹⁰⁵⁷⁾ about the fact that the testimony of the Holy Spirit coincides with faith in the Word of Scripture: "We do not distinguish the Holy Spirit from faith, nor is it contrary to it; for it is the certainty itself in the Word, which makes us certain of the Word, so that we do not waver in it, but believe without all doubt in the most certain way, that it is so and not otherwise than as the Word of God presents to us and says. But it is given to no one without and apart from the word, but through the word. ... Without the oral word the Holy Spirit does not work." It stands thus: The Holy Spirit, who originally spoke His Word through the apostles and prophets, remains in binding with His Word until the Last Day, and through His Word works the

 1056) Huther: "Instead of εν εαυτω Tischendorf reads according to A. G. K., which is only another spelling." For the factual explanation Huther adds: εχει εν εαυτω, "that is, to him the testimony is no longer merely an external one, but by virtue of his faith he has it in himself; the external has become to him an internal one."

1057) Erl. Ed. 58, 153 f.

faith that believes for the sake of the Word itself and not for the sake of reason and human authority. This is the Christian or divine faith (*fides divina*) as distinguished from a merely human opinion or conviction (*fides humana*).

The Divine Power of the Holy Scriptures. [^]

Because modern theologians do not want to "identify" Scripture and the Word of God, they not only give Scripture, conceived as God's own and infallible Word, many evil names ("paper pope," "code of laws fallen from heaven," etc.), but they also ascribe evil effects to Scripture, which they group together under such names as "intellectualism," etc. They think that "psychological mediation" or "psychological connection" is lacking if Scripture is allowed to approach men so directly that Scripture is used as the sole source and norm of Christian doctrine. In reality, however, the matter stands thus: Because Scripture alone, among all the other books that exist in the world, is absolutely the Word of God, it alone is also absolutely *vis vere divina*. What the church proclaims (the "word of the church") also has divine power and effect, but always only insofar and to the extent that the church remains faithful to its mission and proclaims only God's Word.¹⁰⁵⁸⁾ The church has no word of its own. What is not taken from Scripture is not "church word" but, according to Luther's coarse word, "chatter." Other writings can also have divine power and effect, but only insofar and to the extent that they have God's Word excepted in them. Luther's dictum in his Instruction for the Study of Theology will remain true that "no book teaches of eternal life without this alone," namely the Holy Scriptures.¹⁰⁵⁹⁾ What other books teach rightly about eternal life has come into them from the Holy Scriptures.

What is the divine power of the Holy Scriptures? It consists in the fact that the Holy Scriptures work in man such things that are beyond all human power.

Inherent in the Word of the Law, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures (νόμος πνευματικός), is the power to work such a knowledge of sin that a man

1058) Matt. 28:19; Rom. 3:2; 1 Tim. 6:3 ff.; 2 Jn. 9-10.

1059) [St. L. XIV, 25 ff.](#)

recognizes his eternal damnation and despairs of all self-help (*contritio, terrores conscientiae*). Rom. 3:20: διὰ νόμον ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας. It is true that as a result of the divine law, as it still stands written in the heart of the natural man after the Fall, there is still a certain knowledge of sin. But this knowledge of sin is well enough for an evil conscience to arise in man, but it is not enough for man to break down completely before God and despair of all self-help. Rather, the natural man resorts from one method of self-help to another, even if it is suicide. This is the reason why Christ is called to preach not only "forgiveness of sins" but also "repentance" in his name among all peoples.

Inherent in the word of the gospel is the power to work faith in the gospel in man, Rom. 10:17: ἡ πίστις ἐξ ἀκοῆς, and thereby to make man certain of the forgiveness of sins, Rom. 5:1: Δικαιωθέντες ξυστιφεδ οὖν ἐκ πίστεως, εἰρήνην ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν κτλ. Human power and human training, even in the highest potency, are not sufficient to work faith in the gospel, as the Scriptures so clearly teach when they say that Christ crucified is an offence to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks, and that the natural man, the ψυχικός άνθρωπος, οὐ δέχεται τὰ τὸν πνεύματος τὸν Θεὸν [the gospel], μωρία γάρ αὐτῷ ἐστὶν καὶ οὐ δύναται γινῶναι. ["receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them""¹⁰⁶⁰] The experience of all God's children of the Old and New Testaments also agrees with this. They know that faith does not stand in their election or "self-assertion," "self-determination," "self-decision," etc., but solely in God's power and effect, which is not less than the almighty creative power by which God once caused the natural light to shine forth out of darkness.¹⁰⁶¹⁾

The Word of God, which the Scriptures teach, has the power to write the law of God into the heart of man, that is, to transform man inwardly so that he is gladly subject to the law of God and willingly and joyfully walks in God's commandments according to the new man created in him by faith in the Gospel. Human power and education cannot bring this about. Rom. 8:7: τὸ νόμῳ τὸν Θεὸν

1060) 1 Cor. 1:23; 2:14.

1061) Ps. 51:12-14; 2 Cor. 4:6.

οὐχ υποτάσσεται, ονδε γάρ δύναται. [““The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be.””] *"Lex praescribit, evangelium inscribit."* Jer. 31:31 ff.

The Gospel, which the Scriptures teach, has the power to remove man's fear of death and thus make him victorious over death. Human power cannot do this, as Scripture and experience testify. Scripture explicitly teaches that all men must remain servants throughout life for fear of death, Heb. 2:15: φόβω θανάτον διά παντός τον ζην ένοχοι ησαν δονλείας, and have no hope, Eph. 2:12: έλπίδα μη έχοντες. On the other hand, the man who believes the gospel, according to 1 Cor. 15:55, says: "Death, where is thy sting?" (κέντρον, death-sting, a sting that kills.) "Surely no death cannot kill us," etc. This is, in the main points, the *vis vere divina* of the Word of Scripture, because it is God's Word:

That the divine power is not apart from and beside the word, but is effective through the word and therefore proper to the word, is clearly testified by Scripture Rom. 10:17 (έκ), 1 Petr. 1:23 (διά) and is to be held to the Reformed, as is explained in detail in the doctrine of the means of grace. That the *efficientia vere divina*, which is accomplished through the Word of God, is *resistibilis* (Matt. 23:37) is set forth more fully in the doctrine of conversion.

The Perfection of the Holy Scriptures. ^

Modern theology also denies the perfection or sufficiency of Holy Scriptures. Zöckler, for example, asserts¹⁰⁶²⁾ with regard to "the handling of the Bible as a normative and judicial authority in doctrinal controversies" that "the possibility of only a partial and incomplete settlement of the dispute in question by the Scriptural authority must not infrequently be conceded." This is consistent from the standpoint of modern theology. For if Scripture is a book in which the boundaries, between truth and error cannot be clearly shown,¹⁰⁶³⁾ it must necessarily also fail as an arbiter between truth and error. The perfection of Scripture, according to its own description, consists in the fact that it teaches everything.

1062) *Handbook* 2 III, 151 L. u. W. 32, p. 4 f.

1063) Cf. the section "The Relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Writers of the Holy Scriptures," p. 275.

that is necessary for us men to know in order to attain salvation. In more detail it is to be said:

1. The scripture does not contain everything that a man can know in general, e.g. also of the things that belong to the area of the earthly and civil life. However, it is not an "encyclopedia of general human knowledge", as it has been expressed. Nor is it a textbook of the art of agriculture, or architecture, or medical science, etc. Nor is it "a manual of history and geography." These things can be taught, as Luther often reminds us, from natural doctrine, if one will only use reason. It should be noted, however, that: If Scripture teaches incidentally such things as belong to the natural domain, even in this it is always right against all contrary assertions of human "science"; for *πάσα γραφή θεόπνευστος* [**all Scripture is inspired**]. As Luther, for example, says of the historical data of Scripture, that Scripture is the only book in which no historical errors can occur.¹⁰⁶⁴⁾ And where enthusiasts of old and especially of recent times claim that wine is "poison" under all circumstances, we know from Scripture that this is not true.¹⁰⁶⁵⁾ Nevertheless, it should be noted that the Bible is not a textbook of "general human knowledge." There is a large field of human knowledge based on natural reason and human experience.¹⁰⁶⁶⁾

2. The Scripture also does not reveal all divine things. It says of the knowledge we have in this life of divine things: *ἀρτι γινώσκω ἕκ μέρους*¹⁰⁶⁷⁾ and: *ἀρτι γινώσκω ἕκ μέρους* [namely God's] *καὶ ἀνεξιχνίαστοι αἱ ὁδοὶ αὐτοῦ* *τις γὰρ ἐγνώ νοῦν κυρίου;*¹⁰⁶⁸⁾ If recent theologians wish to prove the perfection or absoluteness of the Christian religion from the fact that it forms "a logically perfect whole" in the sense of human reason, this is an error and

 1064) [St. L. XIV, 491](#). 1065) Jn. 2:1-11; 1 Tim. 5:23 etc.
 1066) [L. u. W. 1901, p. 289](#) ff. [F. Pieper], "On the Limits of Human Science."

1067) 1 Cor. 13:12.

1068) Rom. 11:33-34. **Quenstedt**: *Dicitur Sacra Scriptura perfecta, non perfectione absoluta, omne scibile divinum et supernaturale comprehendente; haec enim ecclesiae in his terris militanti, cui Scriptura destinata est, non competit.* (*Systema I*, 147.) ["The Holy Scripture is said to be perfect, not absolute perfection, including all divine and supernatural knowledge; for these things do not belong to the church in these lands, to whom the Scripture is intended."]

a false principle which, consistently carried out, dismisses the whole Christian religion.¹⁰⁶⁹⁾

The Scriptures teach perfectly all things of divine things, which are necessary for us men to know for the attainment of salvation.¹⁰⁷⁰⁾ Of the ιερὰ γράμματα it is said 2 Tim. 3:15: τα δυνάμενά σε αοφίσαι εἰς σωτηρίαν διὰ πίστεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. But not only for Christians in general is the Scripture a sufficient source of knowledge, but also the teacher of the Church is perfect (ἀρτιος) through the Scriptures, for every work incumbent upon him, πρὸς διδασκαλίαν, πρὸς ἐλεγχον, etc., fully equipped (ἐξηρτισμένος), and so perfectly equipped that he is harshly commanded to stick to the word of Christ which we have in the word of his apostles (John 17:20), and not to allow himself any change or addition.¹⁰⁷¹⁾ It stands, then, that the Holy Scriptures, in order to achieve their ultimate purpose, namely, to make men wise unto salvation (σοφίσαι εἰς σωτηρίαν), require no addition whatsoever from anything outside of them, be this called tradition, church word, pope, experience of the theologizing subject, science, or otherwise.¹⁰⁷²⁾

It is self-evident that with the statement of the *perfectio* or *sufficiencia* of Scripture the Scripture Principle is abandoned. If Scripture needs to be supplemented by something outside of it, then eo ipso the Christian church is moved away from its foundation, the word of the apostles and prophets, and then stands on the ego of the alleged supplements. Rome has always spoken of a *perfectio implicita Scripturae Sacrae* in the sense that Scripture is perfect when it is supplemented by the "Church", that is, from Rome, by the Pope. In the same sense, Roman theologians have called Scripture a *norma remissiva*: Scripture is perfect insofar as it directs us to its completion to the Church, that is, to the Pope.

1069) Cf. the section "Christianity as an Absolute Religion," pp. 36 ff, and "Theology and System," pp. 158 ff.

1070) Quenstedt I, 147 sq.: *Dicitur Sacra Scriptura perfecta ... perfectione restricta, sive in ordine ad ea, quae homini Christiano ad recte credendum et sancte et pie vivendum in hac vita cognitu sunt necessaria.* ["The Holy Scripture is said to be perfect ... restricted to perfection, or in order to those things which are necessary for a Christian to believe correctly and to live holy and godly in this life."]

1071) Jn. 8:31-32; 1 Tim. 6:3 f.; 2 Tim. 1:13; Rom. 16:17; Gal. 1:6-9.

1072) The whole section "Holy Scriptures are the only source and norm of Christian doctrine for the Church of our time", pp. 233-256, belongs here.

Our theologians have replied to this:¹⁰⁷³⁾ "A *norma remissiva* not a norm at all, but norm is then what is referred to. According to this opinion, it would have been sufficient if Scripture had only stood, 'Hear the Church!' or rather, according to Roman analysis, 'Hear the Roman Pontiff!' But the pope is not the man of whom Scripture says, 'Him you shall hear,' Matt. 17:5." And regarding Roman *perfectio implicita*, our ancient theologians note: "Thus every poor man would be rich *implicite*, because he can indicate where the riches are, and every unlearned man would be considered learned, because he can point out where there is a school of learning where learned men teach, and he would be abundantly supplied with food who can point others to a rich table set with delicacies of all kinds." ¹⁰⁷⁴⁾ It amounts to a similar mockery and elimination of Scripture when, in the modern-theological camp, Scripture is placed under the control of the "experience" of the theologizing individual. Again, to recall Luther's address, "They speak such things only to lead us out of Scripture and to raise themselves to be masters over us, that we should believe their dream sermons." ¹⁰⁷⁵⁾

The clarity of the Holy Scriptures. [^](#)

According to Roman doctrine, the Scriptures become clear through the light that emanates from the "Church", that is, from the Pope. According to the doctrines of the enthusiasts of all times, the Scripture is illuminated by the "inner light" communicated directly. According to the view of modern theology, the Scriptures are "godly" in the sense that we have a presentation of truth and error. Light is brought into this confusion of truth and error "by the self-consciousness of the theologizing subject" by separating truth from error on the basis of his "experience" or his "experience" and thus bringing the necessary light into Scripture. All of these views of the clarity of Scripture agree that men must illuminate Holy Scriptures. — According to the doctrines of Holy Scriptures, however, exactly the opposite relationship takes place. It is not men who illuminate the Scriptures, but the Scriptures who illuminate men.

1073) Quenstedt 1, 147.

1074) Quenstedt 1, 148.

1075) [St. L. V., 334 f.](#)

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." ¹⁰⁷⁶⁾

According to Scripture, the clarity of Scripture consists in the fact that it clearly presents all that is necessary for us men to know in order to attain salvation. For a more detailed explanation it is to be said:

1. This clarity is taken for granted, because not only individuals with special gifts, but all Christians should read the Scriptures, believe on the basis of the Scriptures, and judge truth and error on the basis of the Scriptures. The clarity of the Old Testament Scriptures is presupposed when it says Luke 16:29: "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear the same." Likewise Christ calls out to the Jews who would not believe His word, Jn. 5:39, "Search the Scriptures; for ye think ye have eternal life in them, and it is they which testify of Me." Of the Bereans, Acts 17:11 praisingly: "They searched the Scriptures daily, whether it was so." This clarity is also presupposed with regard to the apostolic letters, i.e. with regard to the New Testament Scriptures, when Paul exhorts in 2 Thess. 2:15: "Stand therefore and hold to the statutes which ye are taught, whether by our word or epistle." In general, the fact that most apostolic letters are addressed to whole congregations and should be read aloud in the congregations, ¹⁰⁷⁷⁾ presupposes their clarity.

2. But the perspicuity of Scripture is not only taken for granted in Scripture, but is also very expressly taught in it, in order to ward off all thoughts of darkness, which are not only held by unbelievers with regard to Scripture, but are also taught within external Christianity, and even appear among serious Christians. Scripture says of itself that it is a light in the darkness of this world, ἀπό βρέφους τὰ ἱερὰ γράμματα οἶδας, 2 Petr. 1:19, our foot's light (נֶר [HEBREW]) and a light ((אֶרֶץ [HEBREW]) in our path, Ps. 119:105, also for the simple (פֶּתִי [HEBREW]), Ps. 19:8, even for children, ἀπό βρέφους τὰ ἱερὰ γράμματα οἶδας, 2 Tim. 3:15. Even the Johannine writings, which in particular have been declared incomprehensible, ¹⁰⁷⁸⁾

1076) Ps 119:105.

1077) Col. 4-16; 1 Thess. 5:27.

1078) So the Unitarian Enjedinus, Baier-Walther I, 176: *Si obscuritas concisa, abrupta, minime sibi cohaerens et ex allegoriis constans oratio sublimitas dicenda, fateor, Iohannem esse sublimem*. ["If the obscurity is cut off, abrupt, not at all coherent with itself and consisting of allegories to be said to be sublime, I confess that John is sublime"]

are intelligible not only to the πατέρες and νεανίσκοι [fathers and young men], but also to the παῖδια [little children], 1 John 2:13-14.

To whom the clear Scriptures are unclear: 1. To all who either do not understand at all the language in which the Scriptures are presented to them, or yet do not make the language of the Scriptures familiar to themselves. With regard to the first point, Luther famously said: "A Turk must speak darkly to me, but a Turkish child of seven years old can hear him, because I do not know the language.¹⁰⁷⁹⁾ For those who do not understand German, the Bible in German is dark. He who does not know the English language does not understand the English Bible. But the understanding of the clear Scriptures is also greatly hindered by not making the language of the Scriptures familiar to us through diligent reading of the Scriptures. As with any other book, we must "read into" the Bible, or "become accustomed" to the language of Scripture, as Luther used to put it. If the Bible were read as diligently as, for example, newspapers are read in our time, the former would be clearer to us than the latter, because the language of the Bible is the simpler. But now it can happen that rather a thousand words in the newspaper are read than ten words in the scripture and therefore the words of the scripture appear more or less strange and dark to us. This is the reason why some accuse the Bible of darkness, at least in their hearts, even if they do not dare to say so publicly. As for the knowledge of the language and the "reading in", this is of course also true of those who want to understand the Scriptures on the basis of the original languages. To whom only a slight knowledge of Hebrew and Greek stands, the Scriptures in the original languages will only appear clearly to a small extent. In short, as far as the clarity of Scripture is concerned, as Luther reminds us,¹⁰⁸⁰⁾ it depends on knowledge of the languages and on practice in the languages through diligent reading of Scripture. God's will and admonition in the Old and New Testaments is based on the diligent reading of the Scriptures.¹⁰⁸¹⁾

2. Scripture itself explicitly says that its word remains hidden to those who hold a hostile heart attitude toward God's

1079) [St. L. X, 473](#).

1080) So of the longer in his writing "An die Ratsherren aller Städte Deutschlands," [St. L. X, 473 ff.](#)

1081) Ps. 1:2; Deut. 6:6-9; Jn. 5:39; Col. 3:16; 1 Tim. 6:3 f.

Word, that is, who do not learn from Scripture but want to teach and judge Scripture from their human thoughts. This is given as the reason of the darkness of the divine word Matt. 11:25 given: 'Ἐκρύψας ταῦτα ἀπὸ σοφῶν καὶ συνετῶν καὶ ἀπεκάλυψας αὐτὰ νηπίοις.' Likewise 2 Cor. 4:3: "If therefore our gospel is covered, it is covered in them that perish, ἐν οἷς ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦτου ἐτύφλωσεν τὰ νοήματα τῶν ἀπίστων εἰς τὸ μὴ αὐγάσαι τὸν φωτισμὸν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τῆς δόξης τοῦ Χριστοῦ. God has given us men His Word to take away our own perverse thoughts of God and divine things through it. Now, if we do not want to let our own thoughts be taken away from us, but hold on to them, opposing God's thoughts and thus judging God in His Word, the judgment of punishment so often mentioned in Scripture strikes us, that God's Word appears dark and vexatious to us.¹⁰⁸²⁾

(3) The words of Scripture remain obscure even to those who are so prejudiced against certain doctrines of Scripture that they no longer pay external attention to the words of Scripture in question. Thus, for some Reformed people, Christ's words about Holy Communion remain obscured by a false interpretation they have heard from their youth. When they hear or read Christ's words, "This is my body," they immediately substitute in their minds for them, "This means my body," or, "This is my body's sign." They paste a human interpretation over the words of Scripture. The same is to be said of later Lutheran teachers who teach an election to salvation *ex praevisione fidei finalis*, although Scripture, in passages dealing with the state of faith of Christians in time, presents the faith of Christians as a consequence and effect of their eternal election, as the theologians of the sixteenth century and the Formula of Concord also teach.¹⁰⁸³⁾

Objections to the clarity of Holy Scriptures. The following objections have been raised against the clarity of Scripture: 1. The divine order of the public ministry. For it has been thought that this office would be superfluous if the Holy Scriptures were clear.

1082) Is. 6:9-10; Acts 28:25-27; Rom. 9:31-33; 10:21; 11:7-10; Matt. 13:13-15 ff.

1083) Cf. the detailed explanation under the section "The Relationship of Faith to Eternal Election," III, 548 ff.

Answer: Both are true: The Ministry is divine order,¹⁰⁸⁴⁾ and the Scripture is clear according to its own statement, as has been shown above. This is already irrefutably evident from the fact that Christians are to judge by means of Scripture whether pastors are true or false prophets, whether they deviate from the apostle's word or stick to it.¹⁰⁸⁵⁾ From the divine order of the Ministry alongside the clear Scriptures, we can see how much God cares about the salvation of all of us. God is so concerned about our salvation that He has done the rest, so to speak. Every one of us can come to the Christian faith from the Scriptures alone and remain in it.¹⁰⁸⁶⁾ But so that no one misses the goal of his life, God has appointed guardians who are to watch over the souls with doctrines, warnings, punishments and consolations from the Scriptures and with the Scriptures.¹⁰⁸⁷⁾

2 At all times, and especially in our time, the fact that there is great disagreement among theologians in the exposition of the words of Scripture has been pointed out against the clarity of Scripture. This is unfortunately the case. But this disagreement has its reason not in the obscurity of Scripture, but in the fact that the very so-called theologians do not stick to the words of Scripture, but allow themselves to have and throw on the market their own human thoughts about God and divine things. God has so arranged the Holy Scriptures that any erring in Christian doctrine is impossible as long as we abide in simple-minded faith in His Word. This is what Christ teaches when he says John 8:31-32, "If ye abide εν τῷ λόγῳ τῷ ἐμῷ, then ... ye shall know the truth." Likewise, the apostle Paul declares in 1 Tim. 6:3 that straying from the truth has its reason when a teacher does not stay with the wholesome words of Christ. Hence also Luther's constant admonition never to put an exposition (gloss) in the place of the words of Scripture themselves (in the place of the "*nuda Scriptura*"). "The word they shall let stand."¹⁰⁸⁸⁾ It is a characteristic of the Lutheran Church that it does not base its doctrine on an exposition, not even on Luther's exposition, but

1084) The detailed evidence III, 506 ff.

1085) Matt. 7:15; Rom. 16:17. 1086) Jn. 5:39.

1087) Hebr. 13:17; Ezek. 3:18, 3:18. This subject is included again under the section "Scripture and Exegesis".

1088) [St. L. XVIII, 1292 ff.](#)

on the words of Scripture themselves, while Papists and Reformed in all doctrines in which they differ from the Lutheran Church demonstrably do not stand on the word of Scripture itself, but on an "exposition" of the Pope, resp. Zwingli, Calvin, etc..¹⁰⁸⁹⁾ As far as modern theology is concerned, as a result of its denial of the inspiration of Scripture, it expressly declares that in principle it does not want to stand on the Word of Scripture, but on the so-called "Christian experience".

3 In particular, it has been objected against the clarity of the Scriptures that there are also dark passages in the Scriptures, according to universal concession. This is, of course, a fact. Luther also says: "It is true that some passages of Scripture are dark."¹⁰⁹⁰⁾ But in addition to this, the other fact, so clearly attested in Scripture, must of course remain, that Scripture is completely clear, in regard to doctrine and life a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. In more detail it is to be said: Dark passages either do not directly concern the Christian doctrine, but time determinations, place determinations, descriptions of old customs etc.. (*chronologica, topographica, archaeologica*), or if they concern doctrine, the same is clearly and extensively expressed elsewhere in Scripture. Augustin, Luther, Chemnitz, Gerhard, etc., regard it as an established axiom that all Christian doctrines are revealed in such passages of Scripture as need no explanation at all. Augustine: "In the clear passages of Scripture is found all that belongs to faith and life."¹⁰⁹¹⁾ Chemnitz writes, quoting from Augustine, "Many passages of Scripture are put into clear and transparent words, which need no far-fetched exposition, but interpret themselves. To speak with Augustine, access to these passages stands open to scholars and unscholars (*accessus patet doctis et indoctis*). And in these, which are clearly available in Scripture, everything that belongs to faith and life is found."¹⁰⁹²⁾ Luther:¹⁰⁹³⁾ "If there is a dark passage in Scripture, do not doubt that it is certainly the same truth found in the other

1089) See the section "The Cause of Parties within Outer Christendom," p. 22 ff.

1090) [St. L. V, 335](#).

1091) *De Doctrina Christ. II, 9: In eis, quae aperte in Scripturis posita sunt, inveniuntur illa omnia, quae continent fidem moresque vivendi.* ["In them, which are clearly laid down in the Scriptures, are found all those things which contain faith and manners of life."]

1092) *Examen*, Geneva 1667, p. 57.

1093) [St. L. V, 338](#).

place is clear." Luther adds, "If anyone cannot understand the dark, let him stay with the light." That sounds like an unseemly statement of power. And yet it is true and Scripturally spoken. What was to become of the judgment of all doctrines and teachers commanded to all Christians if the faith of Christians was based even in part on dark passages of Scripture that only specialist theologians more or less understood! Dark scriptures have a purpose quite different from that of establishing Christian doctrines. Augustin gives the purpose of dark scriptural passages with the well-known words: *Magnifice et salubriter Spiritus Sanctus ita Scripturas Sanctas modificavit, ut locis apertioribus fami occurreret, obscurioribus autem fastidia detergeret. Nihil enim fere de illis obscuritatibus eruitur, quod non plenissime dictum alibi reperiatur.* [[Google](#)]¹⁰⁹⁴⁾ Luther says:¹⁰⁹⁵⁾ "Scripture without all gloss is the sun and whole light." Luther admittedly also knows "another studying in the Scriptures," namely, studying "when one takes dark Scripture and figures out." But he calls this "a work of hunting, where one seeks and sows a number of amusing [serving for amusement] minds, as the venison. But the study that is for war is that one may be known in the Scriptures, ... that the adversary, overcome with the clear light, may see and confess that the sayings of God are alone and need no man's exposition." ¹⁰⁹⁶⁾ It has been said before and in our time that Luther himself must consequently admit the darkness of the doctrines of Scripture, because he consistently and powerfully teaches that without the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit no

1094) Bei [Baier-Walther 1, 168](#). 1095) [St. L. XVIII, 1293 f.](#)

1096) Quenstedt speaks Svstema 1, 173 in detail about the purpose of the dark passages in the Scriptures. Luther's dicta on dark and clear passages of Scripture read [St. L. V, 336 ff.](#), more fully communicated, thus: "That indeed is true, some passages of Scripture are dark, but they contain nothing that is not found in other places in clear, open passages. And now come the heretics, explain the obscure passages according to their own mind, and contend with them against the clear passages, the foundation of our faith. Then the Fathers fought them with the clear passages, threw light with these on the dark passages, and showed that the dark passages taught the very same thing as the clear passages. Be assured and doubt not that there is nothing brighter than the sun, that is, the Scriptures. Even when a cloud has drifted before it, there is nothing else behind it than the same bright sun. Therefore, if you encounter an obscure passage in Scripture, do not doubt; it certainly contains the same truth which is elsewhere stated in clear language, and if you cannot understand the obscure, then stay with the clear."

letter in Scripture is understood, on this point Luther has truly spoken clearly enough. He distinguishes between the spiritual or internal understanding of Scripture, which is found only among Christians, and the external clarity or understanding, which unbelievers can also have. He writes:¹⁰⁹⁷⁾ *Si de interna claritate dixeris, nullus homo unum iota in Scripturis videt, nisi qui Spiritum Dei habet. Omnes habent obscuratum cor, ita ut, si etiam dicant et norint proferre omnia Scripturae, nihil tamen horum sentiant aut vere cognoscant, neque credunt Deum, nec sese esse creaturas Dei, nec quicquam aliud, iuxta illud Ps. 14: "Dixit insipiens in corde suo: Deus nihil est." Spiritus enim requiritur ad totam Scripturam et ad quamlibet eius partem intelligendam. Si de externa dixeris, nihil prorsus relictum est obscurum aut ambiguum, sed omnia sunt per Verbum in lucem producta certissimam et declarata toto orbi, quaecunque sunt in Scripturis.* [Google] So powerfully does Luther emphasize the external clarity of the words of Scripture that he also wants to suffer a Turk, Jew or heathen to judge whether his (Luther's) or Zwingli's doctrine of the Lord's Supper is expressed in the words of Scripture concerning the Lord's Supper. He writes:¹⁰⁹⁸⁾ "If I were a Turk, a Jew, or a heathen, who did not believe in the faith of Christians, and yet heard or read such a writing about the sacrament, I would have to say: I do not believe the doctrine of Christians; but this I must say: If they want to be Christians and hold their doctrines [on the basis of the words of Scripture], then they must believe that Christ's body and blood are eaten and drunk bodily in the bread and wine." This, as we know, is also the concurring doctrine of the dogmatists.¹⁰⁹⁹⁾ As far as the inner or spiritual understanding of Scripture is concerned, according to Luther *primo loco* faith in Christ belongs to it. Christ is the actual content of Scripture. "Take Christ out of the Scriptures, what else can you find in them?"

1097) *De Servo Arbitrio*. Opp. v. a. VII, 127. [St. L. XVIII, 1683 f.](#)

1098) [St. L. XX, 1093.](#)

1099) Cf. the quotations in [Baier-Walther I, 169 ff.](#) Also in Rathmann's controversy the question was raised: "whether an unconverted Jew could understand the Holy Scriptures according to the letter and fathom the *sensum literalem* from it without a preceding and approaching light of grace". The Jena faculty judged: "Some have the right understanding of the words, but do not have the saved understanding of the mysteries, which belongs to faith; therefore one must also beware of [equivocation] here."

But faith in Christ, wrought by the Holy Spirit through the Word of Scripture, is faith in the *Christus crucifixus*, that is, in Christ in His vicarious satisfaction "that Christ suffered for us."¹¹⁰⁰⁾ Without this faith, the faith remains on the line of the faith of the Turks and the Jews, who believe in God "without caste", and a spiritual understanding of the Scriptures and an "experience of Christ" is not even conceivable.¹¹⁰¹⁾

4 As is well known, it was and is objected against the clarity of the Scriptures that they contain things that are incomprehensible to human reason. In this respect at least, the Holy Scriptures can and must be called dark. Thus Erasmus against Luther.¹¹⁰²⁾ Erasmus points out, for example, the doctrines of the Holy Trinity and the person of Christ, which have not yet been made sufficiently clear. One cannot say that this objection is reasonable. Admittedly, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is a mystery incomprehensible to human reason. No man can comprehend how there can be three distinct persons and yet only one undivided and indivisible God. It is also completely incomprehensible how in Christ God and man, Creator and creature, can form one person. But these facts, which are incomprehensible to narrow human reason, are so clearly revealed in Scripture that faith based on the words of Scripture can grasp them. Whoever is so foolish as to want to encompass and measure articles of faith with his narrow human reason, let him accuse himself of lack of understanding, but not the Holy Scriptures of darkness. Luther reproaches Erasmus: "Scripture simply confesses the Trinity of God and the humanity of Christ [the Son of God] and sin, which is unpardoned. There is nothing of darkness or ambiguity here. But how it is with this the Scripture does not say, as you pretend, nor is it necessary to know. The sophists treat here of their dreams; whom accuse and condemn, and acquit the Holy Scriptures." Our theologians, like Luther, distinguish between the "that" and the "how" (the τό *δ*τι and the το *π*ώς) with respect to the doctrines of faith. The former is clearly revealed in Scripture, the latter we are not to attempt to fathom.

1100) [St. L. XVIII, 1681](#). 0xx. V. a. VII, 125.

1101) [St. L. XI, 1085](#).

1102) *De Servo Arbitrio*. Opp. v. a. VII, 126 sq. [St. L. XVIII, 1682 f.](#)

Also several scriptures have been used to question the clarity of Scripture and in this way to get rid of the authority of Scripture in practice. Especially 2 Petr. 3:16 and 1 Cor. 13:12 have been misused in this way. In the former passage it says: "As he [Paul] addresses it in all the epistles, in which some things are difficult to understand, which confuse the unlearned and the easygoing, as well as the other scriptures, to their own damnation." Quenstedt remarks: *Facit hic locus pro Scripturae perspicuitate*. ["This makes room for clarity of Scripture."] ¹¹⁰³⁾ What our ancient theologians already said about this passage in their polemic against Rome can be summarized in the following points: 1. This passage does not say that all things, but some things in Paul's letters are difficult to understand. 2. What these things are is clear from the context. They concern the last things, the end of this world and the new heaven and the new earth, which is addressed in the immediately preceding. However, these things are difficult to understand and are still mysterious things, insofar as we have only imperfect ideas of the great change of things through the end of the world and of the new heaven and new earth. ¹¹⁰⁴⁾ 3. These mysterious things are misused, not by the understanding Christians who are grounded in the Word of God, but by the unlearned and unstable (the ἀμαθεῖς καὶ αστήρικτοι), in order to pervert not only what Paul wrote about them, but also what stands about them in the other Scriptures. For in the sentence, "which [things] confound the unlearned and unstable,"

1103) *Systema* I, 180.

1104) Even those who, instead of ἐν οἷς, prefer the reading ἐν αἷς (*The Expositores Greek Test.* z. St.), cannot but refer the περί τούτων to the last things mentioned in the preceding, "where he touches on these subjects." (Mayor.) *The Expositores Greek Test.*: „περί τούτων indicates a widening of the reference to include Paul's treatment of the whole question of the second coming." Bloomfield on this passage remarks: "Instead of the vulg. οἷς several versions and some Fathers have αἷς, 'the Epistles.' which is preferred by Beza, Mill, Benson, and Dr. Malthy. ... Yet the weight of authority is decidedly in favor of οἷς, which is retained by all the editors and preferred by most of the commentators." But Bloomfield makes too much of the different readings when he says: "Here some difference of opinion exists as to the sense, which mainly depends upon the reading." Even those who prefer must refer περί τούτων to the last things, to the end of the world and the new heaven and the new earth.

the unlearned and unstable are the acting subject, the predicate is they "confound" (στρεβλόνσιν, they pervert), and "which" is the object which they pervert or is perverted by them. It is not Paul's writings that are here accused, but the unlearned and unstable who twist to their own damnation what Paul wrote and stands in the other writings. Quenstedt notes:¹¹⁰⁵⁾ "A twofold cause is given by Peter for this distortion; one is ignorance (*ignorantia*), the other is instability (*instabilitas*). Neither of these comes from Scripture." When 1 Cor. 13:12: "Now we see through a glass, darkly" is cited against the perspicuity of Scripture, the contrast that immediately follows is disregarded: "but then (τοτέ δέ) face to face." The apostle compares our knowledge of God in this life with that in eternal life. In this life God does not approach us visibly, but in the image (αἰνίγμα, rebuke, likeness), that is, in the covering of His Word, and we know Him only by faith in His Word. In eternal life, however, the covering of the word is done away, and faith ceases. Knowledge by word and faith is replaced by face-to-face vision. In comparison with this face-to-face seeing, our seeing God, which is accomplished by faith in His Word, is seeing "now we see through a glass, darkly."¹¹⁰⁶⁾ Quenstedt still aptly remarks on 1 Cor. 13:12: "The apostle makes knowledge through a glass and in the image common to all wanderers [to eternal life]; he does not even exclude himself and the other apostles. For he does not say, 'You now see,' but, 'We now see through a mirror in the image.' Accordingly, when the apostle wrote this, was the Scripture also dark?"¹¹⁰⁷⁾

We would also like to point out some apt remarks by which our old theologians lead their Roman opponents *ad absurdum*, when they want to call the Scripture clear, insofar as it can be interpreted and interpreted by the Church, respectively by the Pope. Thus

1105) Op. cit.

1106) That Luther has correctly rendered the sense of the expression ἐν αἰνίγματι by his translation "in a dark word", Meyer on this passage also acknowledges.


1107) *Systema* I, 180.

Quenstedt remarks:¹¹⁰⁸⁾ "So also the riddles of the Sphinx could be called clear and distinct, because Oedipus could solve them." Quenstedt also quotes Dannhauer, who says: "Thus there is no difference between the written sayings of God and the Delphic ones, and the writing will be the Sphinx and the Pope the Oedipus." To the remark of the Jesuit Gretser: "Everything that enlightens the mind, when it is interpreted, can be called a luminary and a light" Dannhauer says in his "Hodosophy":¹¹⁰⁹⁾ "Then in all sciences, indeed in the world and outside the world, there is nothing dark anymore. Thus also the Egyptian darkness would be a light and the 'utmost darkness,' by which hell is described."

On the same line with the Roman position on Scripture, according to which Scripture becomes a "light" only through the interpretation of the "church", resp. of the Pope, lies the position into which modern theology has fallen through the denial of the inspiration of Scripture. Just as, according to the Roman view, Scripture becomes a "light" only through the interpretation of the Pope, so, according to the modern theological view, Scripture receives the necessary light, according to which it is possible to distinguish between truth and error in Scripture, from the "Christian I," from the "self-consciousness of the theologizing subject," from "faith" which is independent in itself. Only the "Oedipus" who interprets the Scripture has changed. In the same way, the complete agreement in principle of modern theology with the enthusiasts of all times is evident. The enthusiast "Oedipus" was and is the "inner" light, detached from the scriptural word, just as Luther in the Smalcald Articles shows the agreement in principle between the Pope and the enthusiasts. The pope has all "rights in the shrine of his heart", according to which he judges and interprets the Scriptures. And the enthusiasts are people "who boast of having the spirit without and before the word, and thereby judge, interpret and stretch the scripture or oral word to their liking, as the coiner did and still does much today, who want to be sharp judges between the spirit and the letter [of the scripture] and do not know what they say or set".¹¹¹⁰⁾

Naturally, modern theology, just like Rome and enthusiasm, is vividly interested in the darkness of Scripture.

1108) *Systema* I, 183. 1109) *Hodosophia, Phaenomenon* I, p. 43.

1110) Smalc. Art. M., p. 321 [[Trigl. 495, 3-4](#) 

If Scripture is dark, it is a fitting object to be illuminated by the products of the "self-consciousness of the theologizing subject." A dark Scripture is the life element, as for Rome and rapture, so for modern theology. The dark existences do not thrive in the light. Zöckler,¹¹¹¹⁾ as befits within Protestant Christianity, speaks with restraint of the darkness of Scripture. He says that "the modern believer in inspiration" judges "as a matter of course" the attributes of Scripture (namely, its authority, clarity, perfection, and efficacy) "several times differently than the adherent of the older concept of inspiration. Thus, with regard to the handling of the Bible as normative and judicial authority in doctrinal controversies, where the possibility of only partial and incomplete settlement of the dispute in question by the scriptural authority must not infrequently be conceded. Likewise with regard to questions of perspicuity, where the existing hermeneutical difficulties are more impartially appreciated." Volck-Dorpat states somewhat more clearly,¹¹¹²⁾ "that the interrogation of Scripture is not such an easy matter." Without reservation, however, our American representative of Rome, Cardinal Gibbons-Baltimore, advocates Rome's fundamental proposition of the obscurity of Scripture: "The Scriptures are not of themselves clear and intelligible even in matters of the highest importance."¹¹¹³⁾

11. The historical testimony of scripture. [^](#)

Although the Scriptures testify to themselves as divine authority, as stated under the section "The Divine Authority of Scripture," God has also provided sufficient historical testimony to the same. For the Old Testament Scriptures, we have the testimony of the Jewish Church and the testimony of Christ and His apostles. Christian theologians of all times have rightly said that if the Jews had erred with regard to their canon or had falsified it, Christ would not have pointed so absolutely and without qualification to the Scriptures in the hands of the Jews and to their infallibility, as is done, for example, in the words: "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them

1111) *Handbuch* 2 III, 151. 1112) A. a. O. I, 745.

1113) *The Faith of Our Fathers*. By James Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore, 1894, p. 111. [Ed. — [page 112 in 1905 edition-Google Books](#)]

hear him!" ¹¹¹⁴⁾ "All things must be fulfilled which are written of me in the Law of Moses, in the Prophets and in the Psalms. ¹¹¹⁵⁾ "Search the Scriptures, for ye think ye have eternal life therein, and it is they that testify of me." ¹¹¹⁶⁾ "The Scriptures cannot be broken." ¹¹¹⁷⁾ In contrast, historical testimony is lacking for the Apocrypha of the Old Testament. They have not been recognized as canonical either by the Jewish Church or by Christ."¹¹¹⁸⁾ For the writings of the New Testament we have the historical testimony of the first church (*ecclesia primitiva*). The testimony of the first Church is consistent with respect to the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the thirteen Epistles of Paul, the first Epistle of John, and the first Epistle of Peter (homologumena). With respect to the Epistle to the Hebrews, Second Peter, Second and Third John, the Epistle of James, the Epistle of Jude, and the Revelation, more or less doubts have been expressed as to their canonical character (antilegomena). We have a brief compilation of the homologumena and antilegomena from Eusebius.¹¹¹⁹⁾ The difference between homologumena and antilegomena, which the first church made, the later church cannot abolish by decision. Luther also accepts the distinction that was made within the first church among the writings of the New Testament when he says with regard to the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistles of St. James and Jude, and the Revelation of St. John: "These had a different reputation in former times," with reference to Eusebius, Kirchenges. III, 25. Luther praises the Antilegomena as containing many excellent doctrines, and also admits that objectionable passages could be helped by "glosses," which is why

1114) Luke 16:29. 1115) Luke 24:44.

1116) Jn. 5:39. 1117) Jn. 10:35.

1118) [Baier-Walther I, 149](#). Detailed evidence for the refusal of the first Christian church to include the Apocrypha of the Old Testament in the canon, in Gerhard, *Loci, L. De Script.* 8, § 75 sqq. Cf. Keil, Einleitung, § 216. H. L. Strack, RE.² VII, 442 ff.

1119) Kirchenges. III, 25. about the letters of Jacobi and Juda in particular II, 23. Eusebius reports VI, 25 also about the canon of Origen and his judgment about the letter to the Hebrews. Cf. the further exposition [Baier-Walther I, 150, nota b](#). Baier says: *Negari profecto non potest, quod de scriptoribus ita dubitaverint veteres, ut simul etiam auctoritatem libris ὁἱ ἁπλοῦστοις propriam his denegaverint*. ["It certainly cannot be denied that the ancients were so doubtful about the writers that at the same time they also denied the authority of the books proper to them."] Cf. the detailed article "Canon of the New Testament" by Theodor Zahn, RE.³ IX, 768-796.

he does not want to prevent anyone from setting and lifting them as he pleases. But he does not want to put them under "the right, certain main books of the New Testament". For his own part, he wants to leave it with the doubt that remained about it within the first church.¹¹²⁰⁾ Chemnitz calls it an anti-Christian endeavor that the Roman Church canonizes the Apocrypha of the Old Testament and the Antilegomena of the New Testament by a mere decree, and even allows itself to pronounce the curse on all who do not accept the canon established in the Vulgate in all its parts.¹¹²¹⁾ The Fathers of the Missouri Synod also maintained the distinction between homologumena and antilegomena, though with the further explanation that they left the judgment of the individual antilegomena to everyone. They were, after all, of different opinion among themselves, e.g. with regard to the Apocalypse. Already in the second volume of *Lehre und Wehre* (1856) [p. 204 ff.] the question of the homologumena and antilegomena of the New Testament is treated in detail under the title: "Is he to be declared a heretic or dangerous false teacher who does not consider or declare all the books in the volume of the New Testament to be canonical?" We should probably put the beginning and end of this article here as characteristic. Walther writes: "We are led to this question by the fact that Pastor Röbbelen, on the occasion of the glosses which he published on the Revelation of St. John in the *Lutheraner*, at the same time made the confession that he, with Luther, did not consider the 'Revelation' to be canonical. This, as we hear, has caused great offence here and there. We cannot agree with our dear brother Röbbelen on this point either, since we are convinced that the precious Christian and ecclesiastical book of Revelation belongs to the canon. Nevertheless, we believe that it is unreasonable and probably also based on ignorance of the matter, if one wants to regard an otherwise unsuspicious theologian

 1120) These explanations return in Luther's prefaces to the aforementioned letters, St. L. XIV, 126-139. About the second and third Johannine letters Luther says: "They are not doctrinal epistles, but examples of love and faith and also have a right apostolic spirit." Op. cit., 126 f.

1121) Tridentinum, *Sess. IV*. Smets, p. 15: *Si quis autem libros ipsos integros cum omnibus suis partibus, prout in ecclesia catholica legi consueverunt et in veteri vulgata Latina editione habentur, pro sacris et canonicis non susceperit — anathema sit.* [[Google](#)]

for a dangerous false teacher, who makes the Word of God itself suspect, because he heartily considers all homologues (generally accepted books) to be canonical, but doubts the canonicity of one or another antilegomenon (contradicted book). This would also be quite un-Lutheran, since our dear fathers of the faith, almost without exception, until after the adoption of the Formula of Concord, considered and declared either all or some of the Antilegomena to be writings that did not belong in the canon, not out of hastiness and carelessness with regard to the Word of God, but on the contrary out of great conscientiousness with regard to it. Luther's judgments on the antilegomena are so little a 'stain' on our church that they rather bear witness to how exactly it was once taken in our church with what should be the rule and guideline of our faith and life; and the summary decrees of the Papists and Reformed, that even all antilegomena must be accepted as canonical by every Christian at the loss of his salvation, are so little a testimony to the upholding of the Word of God in these communities that they rather prove how easy it becomes for those to include something in the canon who want to have the Scriptures interpreted either in blind charcoal-burner's faith at the pleasure of the Church (that is, of the Pope) or according to the principles of reason. We think, then, that it would not now be in the wrong place if we were to give our honored readers here some testimonies about the opinion of our fathers, especially in the sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth century, concerning this point; not because we ourselves shared this opinion for our own person, but solely in order to prove that doubts about the canonicity of the contradicted books can also exist among those whom no Lutheran will dare to deny the prestige of orthodoxy, and so among others to purify Luther from the suspicion that he, with reprehensible boldness, judged subjectively books included in the code of the New Testament. ... If this question is not treated in an unchristian way, if the poor people are not confused by a dishonest presentation of what is at stake here, by a biased exploitation of a thesis that is difficult for the people to understand in its true meaning - for that is very easy here - the treatment of the question that has arisen

can only serve to awaken the Christians to serious research and, on this occasion, to establish them more deeply and firmly in their knowledge and in their faith. If in any publication consideration should be given to the present, we declare in advance that we will not consider incomprehensible gossip, which gives itself the appearance of defending the Word of God, worthy of a response, but that we will give due consideration to proper discussion of the important subject matter, even if this would result in a judgment, no matter how harsh, being passed on our old teachers, Luther, Brenz, Chemnitz, Veit and Konrad Dietrich, etc.". In his article, Walther mainly lets Chemnitz speak, who in his *Examen Concilii Tridentini*, however, clearly and powerfully explains that that papist decree together with the attached anathema is an anti-Christian and nonsensical undertaking. Because this exposition is still today quite generally considered "classical" and is recommended for attention, it may find a place here in the main points.¹¹²²⁾ Chemnitz writes: ¹¹²³⁾ *Tertia igitur quaestio est, an ea scripta, de quibus in antiquissima ecclesia propter quorundam contradictionem dubitatum fuit, ideo quod testificationes primitivae ecclesiae de his non consentirent, an, inquam, praesens ecclesia possit illa scripta facere canonica, catholica et paria illis, quae primi ordinis sunt. Pontificii non tantum disputant, se hoc posse, sed de facto illam auctoritatem usurpant, in universum tollentes primitivae et antiquissimae ecclesiae necessariam distinctionem inter libros canonicos et apocryphos seu ecclesiasticos. Sed manifestissimum est ex iis, quae diximus, ecclesiam nullo modo habere illam auctoritatem; eadem enim ratione posset etiam vel canonicos libros reiicere, vel adulterinos canonizare. Tota enim haec res (sicut diximus) pendet ex certis testificationibus eius ecclesiae, quae tempore apostolorum fuit, quas acceptas proxime sequens ecclesia certis et fide dignis historiis conservavit. [Google] Ubi igitur non possunt proferri certissima documenta primitivae et antiquissimae ecclesiae ex testificationibus veterum, qui non longe post apostolorum tempora vixerunt, libros illos, de quibus controversitur, fuisse sine contradictione et dubitatione pro legitimis et certis acceptos et commendatos ecclesiae, non valent ulla humana decreta.*

 1122) Walther translated it [L. u. W. II, p. 205-210](#), into German, in his edition of [Baier it](#) is printed [I, 150 sqq.](#) in the original Latin.

1123) *Examen*, Geneva edition 1667, p- 48 sqq.

Quam insolens enim est audacia, ita statuere: Licet primitiva et sequens antiquissima ecclesia de libris illis propter multorum ecclesiasticorum contradictionem dubitarit, ideo quod non satis certa et firma auctoritatis ipsorum testimonia extarent, hoc tamen non obstante decernimus, debere illos pro omnino certis pari auctoritate cum illis, qui legitimi semper iudicati sunt, recipi! Sed quibus documentis hoc vestrum decretum probatis? Eespondet Pighius: Ecclesia habet illam potestatem, quod potest scriptis quibusdam impertiri canonicam auctoritatem, quam nec ex se, nec suis auctoribus habent. Quin igitur impartiantur illam auctoritatem vel fabulis Aesopi vel veris narrationibus Luciani? [Google] Non quod libros illos, de quibus controversia est, velim fabulis Aesopi comparari (tribuo enim illis cum Cypriano et Hieronymo honorificum locum, quem in veteri ecclesia semper habuerunt), sed επαγωγή εις αδύνατον, sicut dialectici loquuntur, volui ostendere, in disputatione de libris Scripturae ecclesiam non habere illam potestatem, quod possit ex falsis scriptis facere vera, ex veris falsa, ex dubiis et incertis facere certa, canonica et legitima sine ullis certis et firmis documentis, quae ad hanc rem requiri, supra diximus. ... In hac testificatione alia etiam est ratio illius ecclesiae, quae fuit illis temporibus, cum libri illi primum scriberentur, et eius ecclesiae, quae postea secuta est. Illa enim tantum conservat et ad posteros transmittit testificationem primae ecclesiae, non autem vel debet vel potest aliquid de libris illis statuere, cuius non habeat certa documenta ex testificatione primae ecclesiae. ... [Google] Tertia quaestio est: Qui libri sunt in canone, et qui non sunt in canone? sicut Hieronymus loquitur. Non autem de suppositiciis, adulterinis et falsis scriptis nunc loquimur, quorum catalogus extat apud Eusebium, et dist. 15. can. "Sancta Romana" Sed de illis libris quaestio est, qui simul extant in Vulgata biblicorum editione, quique in ecclesiis a fidelibus leguntur. De illis quaeritur veteris ecclesiae testificatio, an omnes sint eiusdem certitudinis' et paris auctoritatis. Est autem certissimum et manifestissimum, veteris ecclesiae hanc esse testificationem, quod ex illis libris quidam sint in canone, quidam non sint in canone, sed sint apocryphi. ... Ex scriptis Veteris Testamenti inter apocrypha, quae non sunt in canone, numerantur liber Sapientiae, Syrach etc. Ex libris Novi Testamenti, qui in prima et veteri ecclesia non habuerunt satis certa, firma et consentientia certitudinis et auctoritatis suae testimonia, hinc recensentur: [Google] Eusebius 1. 3, c. 25: "Scripta, quae non habentur

pro indubitatis, sed quibus contradicitur, licet multis sint cognita, haec sunt: Epistola Jacobi, Judae, posterior Petri et altera cum tertia Johannis; Apocalypsin Johannis quidam reprobant, quidam certis et indubitatis scripturis adiudicant. ... Non est ignorandum, quod quidam in Romana ecclesia epistolam ad Ebraeos reprobarunt, asserentes, contradici, quasi non sit Pauli." ... Haec veterum testimonia ideo annotavi, ut non tantum notus sit catalogus scriptorum Novi Testamenti, quae non habent satis certa, firma et consentientia auctoritatis suae testimonia, sed ut praecipue notari possint rationes, quare de illis dubitatum fuerit: 1. quia apud veteres non inventa fuerunt satis certa, firma et consentientia testimonia de testificatione primae apostolicae ecclesiae, quod libri illi essent ab apostolis comprobati et ecclesiae commendati; 2. quia non certo ex testificatione primae et veteris ecclesiae constitit, an ab illis, sub quorum nomine editi sunt, libri illi conscripti essent, sed iudicati fuerunt ab aliis sub apostolorum nomine editi; [Google] 3. cum quidam ex vetustissimis aliquos ex illis libris tribuerent apostolis, quidam vero contradicerent, res illa, sicut non erat indubitato certa, relicta fuit in dubio. Pendet enim tota haec disputatio a certis, firmis et consentientibus primae et veteris ecclesiae testificationibus, quae ubi desunt, sequens ecclesia, sicut non potest ex falsis facere vera, ita nec ex dubiis potest certa facere sine manifestis et firmis documentis. Contra haec tam manifesta antiquitatis testimonia Tridentinum Concilium sessione quarta ita decernit: "Si quis libros integros cum omnibus suis partibus, prout in veteri Vulgata Latina editione habentur, pro sacris et canonicis non suscepit, anathema sit." Sed unde hoc suum decretum contra antiquitatis testimonia probant et confirmant? Nun proferunt certa et manifesta quaedam documenta ex testificationibus primae apostolicae et veteris ecclesiae, quod libri illi controversi eandem certitudinem et parem auctoritatem cum reliquis, de quibus nunquam dubitatum fuit, habeant? Nihil minus; neque enim possunt hoc facere. Sed rapiunt sibi hanc potestatem, quod papa cum suis praelatis possit et illis et forsitan aliis etiam libris impertiri canonicam auctoritatem, quam nec ex se, nec ex suis auctoribus merentur et quam tempore apostolorum et primitivae ecclesiae non habuerunt, sicut Pighius contendit. Quin igitur aperte dicunt, quod res est? [Google] Licet probari non possit, libros illos vel a prophetis, vel ab apostolis sive scriptos, sive comprobatos et a prima veterique ecclesia certo et constanter receptos, imo licet contrarium manifestissimis antiquitatis

testimoniis meridiana luce clarius probetur: hoc tamen non obstante statuimus et decernimus, certo hoc credendum esse, licet nulla a nobis huius rei idonea proferantur documenta, quia (si dis placet) plenitudo huiusmodi antichristianae potestatis sepulta est in scrinio pectoris pontificii. — Dicunt anathema omnibus, qui libros apocryphos non recipiunt eadem certitudine et auctoritate sicut canonicos. Anathema igitur erit Eusebius, Jerome, Origen, Melito et tota prima apostolica ea ecclesia, ex cuius testificatione illa, quae supra de libris istis recitavimus, accepta sunt. ... Tota igitur disputatio in hac quaestione consistit: an certum et indubitatum sit, libros illos, de quibus haec controversia est, esse Scripturam divinitus inspiratam a prophetis et apostolis, quae divinitus auctoritatem illam habuerunt vel editam, vel approbatam. [Google] Tota antiquitas respondet, non esse certum, sed propter multorum contradictiones fuisse dubitatum. Tridentinum vero supercilium anathema minatur, nisi quis illos susceperit pari, imo eadem certitudine et auctoritate sicut reliquos libros, de quibus nunquam dubitatum fuit. Quid igitur mirum est, quod parasiti quidam pontificii disputarunt, papam posse novos fidei articulos condere, cum hoc loco novam Scripturam canonicam fabricare non vereatur? ut nullum amplius sit dubium, quis sit ille, qui, in templo Dei sedens, super omne, quod Deus dicitur, extollitur, 2 Thess. 2. — Numquid igitur simpliciter abiiciendi et damnandi sunt libri illi? Nequaquam hoc quaerimus. Quem igitur usum habet haec disputatio f Respondeo: ut regula fidei sive sanae in ecclesia doctrinae certa sit. Ex solis enim libris canonicis auctoritatem ecclesiasticorum dogmatum confirmandam veteres censuerunt, sicut testimonia supra allegata sunt. Solius canonicae Scripturae auctoritas idonea iudicata fuit ad roboranda illa, quae in contentionem veniunt; reliquos vero libros, quos Cyprianus ecclesiasticos, Hieronymus apocryphos nominat, legi quidem voluerunt in ecclesia ad aedificationem plebis, non ad auctoritatem ecclesiarum dogmatum confirmandam. [Google] Non enim voluerunt illos proferri ad auctoritatem ex his fidei confirmandam. Et illorum auctoritas ad roboranda ea, quae in contentionem veniunt, minus idonea iudicata fuit. Nullum igitur dogma ex istis libris exstrui debet, quod non habet certa et manifesta fundamenta et testimonia in aliis canonicis libris. Nihil, quod controversum est, ex istis libris probari potest, si non extent aliae probationes et confirmationes in libris canonicis. Sed quae in illis libris dicuntur, exponenda et intelligenda sunt iuxta

analogiam eorum, quae manifeste traduntur in libris canonicis. Hanc esse vetustatis sententiam, nullum est dubium. Sed Concilium Tridentinum propter illam ipsam causam necessariam et verissimam hanc veteris ecclesiae distinctionem infringit, subvertit et tollit, quia (sicut Andradius meus inquit) non volunt se in has conicere angustias, ut omnibus aliis praesidiis destituti a sola canonica Scriptura fidem mutuentur. Inquit enim synodus Tridentina, se ideo ex libris apocryphis facere canonicos, ut ostendat, quibus potissimum testimoniis et praesidiis in confirmandis dogmatibus et instaurandis moribus sit usura. Walther adds:¹¹²⁴⁾ *Idem docent A. Osiander († 1617), Aeg. Hunnius, Hafenrefferus, C. Dietericus, F. Balduinus, Th. Thummus et alii.* [[Google](#)]

It has been pointed out that this distinction between homologumena and antilegomena was abandoned by later Lutheran teachers. Philippi¹¹²⁵⁾ refers especially to Gerhard, whom he calls, next to Chemnitz, the "most famous dogmatist" of the Lutheran Church. Admittedly, among the later dogmatists, in one form or another, the remark is found that no distinction is made by the present church (*hodie*) between the writings of the New Testament.¹¹²⁶⁾ As for Gerhard, he remarks in regard to the Apocalypse that he considers it canonical. However, he occasionally adds: *Interim tamen, cum in primitiva ecclesia aliquamdiu apud quosdam de huius libri auctore dubitatum fuerit, ideo ad secundi ordinis canonicos eum referimus; non quidem canonicam auctoritatem ei detrahentes, interim nec reliquis libris canonicis, de quibus nunquam dubitatum fuit, simpliciter et per omnia ipsum coniungentes; et aequissimo iure postulamus, interpretationem huius libri instituendam esse talem, quae cum primi ordinis canonicis libris nulla ratione pugnet.* [[Google](#)]¹¹²⁷⁾ This then comes down to the distinction between homologumena and antilegomena. Just as we cannot speak of a second-order Godhead in the doctrine of God, which old and new Subordinationists do, so we cannot speak of deuterocanonical writings without a certain self-contradiction in the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures.

 1124) [Baier-Walther 1, 153](#). 1125) [Glaubenslehre 1, 108](#). [1854 ed.]

1126) Thus also [Baier 1, 150, 153](#).

1127) *Disputatt. Theology. Ienae*, 1655, p. 1015. Quoted by Walther in [Baier-Walther 1, 153](#).

which is God's unbreakable Word. If earlier and in our time it has been said: Because there are Antilegomena, we cannot exactly determine the extent of the canon and therefore we cannot know exactly what is *principium cognoscendi* and norma of Christian doctrine, here there is a human error of calculation. That the church of the New Testament has a completely fixed canon, to which no uncertainty is attached, we know from Jn. 8:31-32; 17:20; Eph. 2:20, because the commanded adherence to the doctrine of Christ and the apostles presupposes the certain possession of this doctrine.

In this context, it has been asked whether the distinction between homologumena and antilegomena "has a pervasive dogmatic significance". For our part, we answer the question in the negative, if it has the meaning of whether he who considers and treats the Antilegomena as canonical per se, thereby has more and different doctrines. On the one hand, we hold to the Old Church distinction between the New Testament writings; on the other hand, we are convinced that in the Antilegomena, even if taken by themselves, there is neither a false doctrine nor a doctrine which, according to its content, goes beyond the books which have the unanimous testimony of the *ecclesia primitiva*. We consider that Rome and sectarians misuse the Epistle of James when they make this Epistle the protector of their doctrine of works. We only have to keep in mind that James addresses faith, not in so far as we are justified before God by faith, but in so far as we are to show our faith to men according to God's will and order, which can only be done by works. We refer to the section "Justification by Works" (II, 634 ff.). The peculiarity of the Epistle of James has also been expressed in this way: James is not dealing with both the new and the old man in the Christian. As far as the Apocalypse is concerned, it also does not give the old and new Millenialists the slightest reason to find in it the chiliasm with which they have troubled and plagued the Church. This judgment is substantiated under the section "The Second Coming of Christ" (III, 687 ff.). In general, all addresses are misleading, as if the number of Christian doctrines were to be estimated according to the number of biblical books. It has been rightly pointed out that the Gospel of Matthew already contains the entire Christian doctrine, and that for a number of

years missionaries to the Gentiles were content, or rather had to be content, with a translation of this one Gospel, and taught from it all the articles of the Christian faith. Whoever wants to can convince himself that in the Gospel of Matthew all doctrines are revealed which the Lutheran church confesses in the Book of Concord. Yet with respect to the whole Scripture of the New Testament there remains true what is said of the Scripture of the Old Testament, Rom. 15:4: Ὅσα προεγράφη, εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν διδασκαλίαν. Christians rejoice and thank God's grace and care that the saving truth is witnessed to them by so many witnesses appointed by God for this purpose. They walk in this manifold testimony "as in a paradise," and their assurance is strengthened thereby. As Paul writes to the Philippians (3:1), "That I always write one thing (τα αὐτό) does not grieve me, and makes you the more certain."

12. The integrity of the biblical text. ^

This subject had already to be treated under the section "Objections to the Inspiration of Scripture" (pp. 286 ff.), because the fact of variae lectiones is asserted as a main ground against the inspiration of Scripture. We concluded there that the integrity of the biblical text is established both *a priori*, by Christ's promise, and *a posteriori*, by scientific research. Details need to be added here, and what has already been said needs to be emphasized.

1. Whether the original Hebrew text was punctuated, as most Lutheran dogmatists assume,¹¹²⁸ or not punctuated, as Luther very firmly insists,¹¹²⁹ is a historical question,

1128) Thus Gerhard, *Loci, L. De Script. S.*, in great detail, § 334-353.

1129) Luther says of the *puncta vocalia*: *sunt recens inventum unb fügt tjinsu: Quare ergo non admodum moror superstitiones istas grammaticas, quanquam pro nobis stat grammatica, si recte punctetur. (Opp. exeg. Erl. XXIII, 410 sq. [St. L. VI, 195.](#))* In his Commentary on Genesis (op. [cit., XI, 85; St. L. II, 1838](#)) Luther says: *Non multum curo supra et infra Rabbīnorum: melius esset legere Scripturam iuxta intra. Ac Novum Testamentum praebebat nobis intellectum intralem, non superiorem et inferiorem.* Before Luther says: *Tempore Hieronymi nondum sane videtur fuisse usus punctorum, sed absque illis tota Biblia lecta sunt.* Luther obviously fears that by assuming that *puncta vocalia* esse textui coaeva, what is outside of Scripture would be made the principle of interpretation of Scripture.

which has nothing to do either with the inspiration of Scripture or with the integrity of the text. It is not a witty argument when modern theologians rather generally assert that the Lutheran dogmatists, by their acceptance of verbal inspiration, must necessarily have been driven away to the adoption of the original spelling of the vowel points.¹¹³⁰⁾ Luther teaches verbal inspiration in the most accomplished form and decisiveness, as we have seen, and yet just as decisively rejects the originality of the vowel points.

We would like to point out how clearly God's hand has watched over the integrity of the biblical text of the New Testament. We truly stand before a strange miracle of divine preservation of the text, if only half of what according to L. Schulze's account¹¹³¹⁾ threatened the transmission of the original text is true. L. Schulze writes: " The negligence of the copyists, which already Cicero complained about for his time (Ad Quint., fr. 3, 5), is also complained about by Clemens Alexandrinus (str. 4, 6) and Origen (In Matt. 19, 19, t. XV). The variants are: 1. accidental, since at first one did not strictly adhere to literalness of the divine word,¹¹³²⁾ notably in private use did not see to great accuracy; they arose partly from negligence of the copyists (omissions, repetitions, dislocations of words, confusion of letters, the latter favored by the uncials and the *scriptio continua*); partly from errors of hearing in dictation (iotacism, e. g. ἰδὲ for εἰ δέ, 1 Tim. 5:21; 1 Thess. 2:7; 2 Cor. 5:10; in enumerations there was omission or transposition or interchange with synonyms, e.g. Rom. 1:30-31 and Gal. 5:18-23); partly finally from wrong understanding of what was heard or read, e.g. in abbreviations. In addition, there were 2. intentional variants, especially since the scholarly treatment of the text, by improving the language according to certain grammatical

1130) [Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 251](#); Cremer, RE. ² VI, 755.

1131) *Handbuch der theol. Wissenschaften* I, 489.

1132) This is not historically correct. Just as the apostles claim divine authority for their orally proclaimed and honored written word, it is also sufficiently attested by the writings of the church fathers of the first centuries and also acknowledged by modern theologians (cf. e.g. Ihmels, [Zentralfragen, p. 56](#)) that the "first church" "identified" Scripture and the Word of God. This, after all, is what is blamed on the first church. Cf. Ihmels op. cit.

rules or clarifying dark passages by additions or changes (especially foreign expressions) or to guard against (dogmatic) misunderstanding or to correct supposedly false information or to make the passages consistent by additions from oral tradition or comparison of parallels (so especially in the Gospels and in quotations from LXX). This was done both by the copyists and often by the correctors. These learned proceedings resulted in 3. glosses, which, first placed in the margin, later came into the text, with and instead of the original reading; likewise from the liturgical additions to the lectionaries, which made changes necessary because of the inappropriate beginning and end of the pericopes. To this end, the text 4. was arbitrarily changed according to the naturalized translations." If, as L. Schulze himself remarks, the original form of the text was nevertheless changed by the many copies "but not in essential matters," then we stand, as has also been noted in more recent times,¹¹³³⁾ before a miracle of divine providence. In fact, the textual changes in the course of eighteen hundred years are of so little importance that in theological teaching we can use not only the various recent text-critical editions, but also the *textus receptus* side by side without interference. We have already mentioned (p. 288 f.) that in *The Expositor's Greek Testament* the editor and contributors have thought it best to reprint the *textus receptus*, "representing the Greek text as known to Erasmus in the sixteenth century." We have already pointed out why we cannot ignore recent textual criticism in theological education. But in fact it stands like this: Even if we did not have all the newer text-critical work, but were only dependent on the *textus receptus*, which is essentially the basis of Luther's Bible translation as well as of the English Authorized Version, the Christian church of our time would not be poorer in the knowledge of divine truth. The church of our time does not lack a fixed text of the Bible, but the belief in the sufficiently fixed text.

3. If it were possible, we would like to do a little to ensure that the animosity that experience has shown

1133) Philippi, [Glaubensl. I, 115 f.](#)

to be strong when dealing with text-critical questions is kept within appropriate limits. The animosity is easier to declare in the case of text critics who disagree for "scientific reasons". There even racial prejudices easily play into it. One should not have given Tischendorf credit for attaching a somewhat exaggerated significance to his Sinaitic finding (ⲥ [HEBREW]). It has also happened similarly to those who belong to another nationality. English textual critics also disagree among themselves, as is evident, for example, from Bruce's remarks.¹¹³⁴⁾ In general, Bruce says that the judgments of "experts in modern criticism ... in many cases do not accord, and their results cannot be regarded as *final*". This is one of the reasons why his and his colleagues' commentary takes the *textus receptus* as its basis. But even among the theologians who are considered "laymen" in textual criticism, to which Bruce also counts himself,¹¹³⁵⁾ an agitation has not infrequently come to light, especially in the passage 1 John 5:7-8. The agitation seems unnecessary to us. For one thing, everyone agrees that the passage about the three witnesses in heaven is not necessary to prove the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. This doctrine has more than sufficient testimony in many passages of Scripture. This is precisely what Tischendorf says when he remarks: *Error est longe gravissimus, si qui, quod de sancta trinitate ecclesia Christi praecepit, a verbis illis Iohanni obtrusis vel maxime pendere opinati sunt*. ["It is by far the gravest error if those who thought that what the church of Christ commanded concerning the holy Trinity were rejected by those words of John, or that they depended mainly on them."] ¹¹³⁶⁾ In our judgment, the decision about the authenticity or falsity of the words of the three witnesses in heaven depends mainly on the understanding of certain words of Cyprian, which are about two hundred years older than our oldest *codices*. For we read in Cyprian, *De Unitate Ecclesiae* (in my edition, Erasmus, Basel 1626, p. 164), the words, *Dicit Dominus: "Ego et Pater unum sumus."* "The Lord says, I and the Father are one." Here Cyprian quotes John 10:30: Ἐγώ και δ πατήρ εν ἐσ2μεν. Then Cyprian immediately continues, "*Et iterum de Patre et Filio et Spiritu Sancto scriptum est: 'Et tres unum sunt'*", "And yet again it stands written of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit: 'And the three are one.'" Those who now claim that the words 1 John 6:7 are not quoted here: δ πατήρ, δ λόγος και.

1134) *The Expositor's Greek Test.* I, Introduction, p. 55, 4.

1135) *op. cit.*, p. 56.

1136) Quoted in *The Expositor's Greek Testament* z. St.

το ἅγιον πνεῦμα, καὶ οὗτοι οἱ τρεῖς ἐν εἰσί, undertake the obligation to prove that the words of Cyprian: "*Et tres unum sunt*", spoken of the three persons of the Godhead, stand elsewhere in Scripture than 1 John 5. In contrast, it has been said (Griesbach) that Cyprian is not quoting a scriptural word here, but is giving here his own allegorical interpretation of the three witnesses on earth: τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ νόωρ καὶ τὸ αἷμα, καὶ οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἐν εἰσιν. This objection does not seem valid because Cyprian expressly says that he quotes biblical passages, not merely in the words, *Dicit Dominus*: "*Ego et Pater unum sumus*," but also in the words, *Et iterum de Patre et Filio et Spiritu Sancto scriptum est* [it stands written]: "*Et tres unum sunt*." These, in our judgment, are the objective facts. Even those who dispute the authenticity of the words of the three witnesses in heaven admit that Cyprian's words "seem" to refer to 1 John 5:7. So also Huther in Meyer's Commentary. But we can gain the right to speak of a mere "appearance" only by showing the words to stand elsewhere in Scripture. Even Huther knows how to justify his assumption of a "semblance" only thus: "The peculiar quotation in Cyprian finds its explanation in the symbolical interpretation of the words: τὸ πνεῦμα, τὸ, νόωρ καὶ τὸ αἷμα of the Trinity." But quite alike how Cyprian otherwise allegorizes in the doctrine of the Trinity: in the words quoted he does not allegorize, but quotes scriptural words: *Et iterum ... scriptum est*. Now, since the words of Cyprian are about two hundred years older than the oldest manuscripts preserved to us (B and ⲥ [HEBREW]), it should not be said of those who consider the words of the three witnesses in heaven to be genuine (e.g. Besser, Stöckhardt, Sander, Mayer, and others) that they are scientifically backward. Against the quotation from Cyprian it has been objected that Cyprian quotes v. 8 in the words: *Et iterum de Patre et Filio et Spiritu Sancto scriptum est*: "*Et tres unum sunt*". But v. 8 does not stand ἐν εἰσιν, "*unum sunt*," at all, but εἰς τὸ ἐν εἰσιν, "*in unum sunt*," "agree together." Now, since Cyprian is known to be knowledgeable of the Greek language, it is remote to suppose that he should have rendered εἰς τὸ ἐν εἰσιν as "*unum sunt*." — But enough of this in a dogmatic. Personally, we have always been sorry for the time we had to spend, of necessity, on the text-critical discussion of 1 John 5:7-8 in the regular dogmatic course. But a double

practical advantage came out of it. Firstly, we had the opportunity, after Tischendorf's proceedings, to point out emphatically that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity does not depend in the least on the authenticity of this passage, because this doctrine has more than sufficient testimony in other scriptural passages. On the other hand, we have had the opportunity to inculcate the important polemical rule that in the struggle with the Unitarians, who surround us in this country on all sides, we should never want to use the passage 1 John 5:7-8. If this is done, the Unitarians transfer the disputation to the field of textual criticism, the *status controversiae*, the doctrine of the Trinity, is moved out of sight, and the audience gets the impression that the scriptural basis for the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is weak.

Finally, it should be noted that no theologian risks his scientific reputation, no matter which text-critical views he holds with regard to 1 John 5:7-8 according to his best conviction. With the "known to be inauthentic", which is so familiar to many newer theologians especially with regard to 1 John 5:7-8, they do not prove their scientific superiority, but the opposite. Those who have some knowledge of the real state of affairs use more modest language on this point. Bloomfield remarks in his commentary that on the passage "volumes have been written by some of the most eminent scholars." He lists the names of those who hold the pro and con; then he comments, as Luther is known to have done, on both readings, and finally retreats to Bengel's familiar position. Bloomfield concludes by saying, "On again examining, for this second edition of the present work, the evidence *for* and *against* the words, I still think that much of the mystery in which Bishop Middleton considers the passage as enveloped has yet to be cleared away; and my impression is ... that, from the peculiar character of the evidence, external and internal (even after all that has been effected to strengthen the *internal* evidence, by the very learned [Bishop Burgess](#)¹¹³⁷), we are neither authorized to receive the passage as indubitably genuine nor, on the other hand, to reject it indubitably as spurious, but to wait

1137) [Bishop Burgeß](#) belongs to the class of theologians who rely on text and context for the authenticity of the passage. Stöckhardt also belonged to these, while others from our narrower circle expressed the opposite opinion.

for further evidence." But the "waiting for further evidence" does not want to enter the mind of most recent theologians, including most recent textual critics. They want the question to be considered closed. But Bengel's expressed hope that old documents might come to light that shed further light on the text of the Johannine passage might not be so unreasonable after all, in light of more recent finds. But, whether new findings or not: The Church of God stood and stands on a sufficiently fixed biblical text, as we know *a priori* from Christ's promise (Jn. 8:31-32; 17:20) and recognize *a posteriori* through scientific research. At all times, the Church of God, which is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, stood at the disposal of a biblical text through which it was enabled to carry out its mission, namely to teach all nations everything as Christ commanded it. Luther could say in his day, "Let the word stand." The same could be said by Athanasius and Augustine in their day. We can say the same in our time. Much to be deplored are the frivolous addresses about the biblical text, based on ignorance, as they are now found in writings that make the results of recent textual criticism accessible to the greater public in so-called "scientific-commonly understandable presentations." We read in such a writing:¹¹³⁸⁾ "One has lived in the handed down text as in an ancient, comfortable house; the spirit of the fathers ruled there and made it homelike and trustworthy. Now the building commission comes, declares it dilapidated and demands that we move out. Yes, has the building commission made the house rotten and dilapidated? Is it not rather thanks to them that life was saved from the dilapidated house? And life-saving is what textual criticism wants to offer to faith." When the ancient text of the Bible is thus compared to a rotten house from which hasty escape is required in order to save the life of the church, this must necessarily cause great confusion among the large audience who cannot verify the matter. It seems that the writer of the words quoted was completely ignorant of the real facts. He occasionally calls the text from which Luther translated the "bad text of Erasmus." He knows or considers

 1138) The text of the New Testament according to its historical development. By August Pott, divisional pastor. Teubner in Leipzig 1906, p. 14. The text belongs to the "Collection of scientific and general understanding from the world of nature and the spiritual world".

not that the newer and newest critical text editions differ so little from the "bad text of Erasmus" (which we have essentially in the *textus receptus*) that these texts can be used side by side without real interference. We fear a bad influence from *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, because it is worked entirely in the modern-theological sense and has found a wide circulation. But we are happy about two things. First, that this five-volume commentary takes the *textus receptus* as its basis. This at least somewhat counteracts the wild talk that we would have to move out of the "rotten" house of the old text as soon as possible if we did not want to lose the foundation of faith. Then we are pleased that the editor declares that he would like to wait for the "final results" of the newer textual criticism before he gives the *textus receptus* its farewell.

13. The Scriptures in the original, and the translations, p.

415. [^]_—

Because the Scriptures are certain for the use of all Christians without distinction of class, generation, age, etc., as they themselves teach very emphatically,¹¹³⁹⁾ it is God's will that they also be translated into the various human languages. Recognizing the divine will, the first Christian Church also provided for translations of the Scriptures into foreign languages.¹¹⁴⁰⁾ Nevertheless, there is not to be taught an absolute necessity of reading the Scriptures for the attainment of salvation. Absolutely necessary is only the knowledge of the main points of the Christian doctrines, through which repentance and faith in the forgiveness of sins acquired by Christ come about in a man.¹¹⁴¹⁾ This knowledge, however, can also be imparted by merely listening to a sermon, discourse, instruction, etc., taken from the Scriptures. This is also what the doctrines of dogmatism teach when they speak of the *necessitas*

1139) Deut. 6:6-9; Jos. 1:8; Is. 34:16; Neh. 8:2-8; 2 Kings 23:1-2; Luke 16:29 ff.; Jn. 5:39; 20:31; Acts 17:11; 2 Thess. 2:15; 1 Jn. 1:4; 2:13-14; 2 Tim. 3:15; Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27. The dogmatists use to say: *Finis cui Scripturae Sacrae omnes sunt Christiani, imo omnes homines*. ["The end to which the Sacred Scriptures are for all Christians, yes, all men."]

1140) Detailed news about it also with Gerhard, *Loci, L. De Script. S.*, § 494 sqq. Cf. the article "Bible Translations" in some major encyclopedia, e.g. RE. ² II, 437 ff; Meusel I, 429 ff. Also Fürbringer, [Einl. in das N. T. St. Louis 1914, pp. 14 f.](#)

1141) Luke 24:46-47.

Scripturae Sacrae. They add that a man can come to faith and thus become a member of the Christian Church without even knowing that there is a Holy Scriptures. Gerhard, for example, says:¹¹⁴²⁾ *Credere, quod sint aliquae divinae Scripturae, non est simpliciter et absolute necessarium ad salutem, nimirum si ex simplici ignorantia illud procedat, quia multi salvati sunt, qui substantialia sive fundamentalia fidei Christianae complexi sunt.* [[Google](#)] But after they have become Christians, it is God's will that they also read the Scriptures, search them, and judge according to the Scriptures, as is evident from the passages of Scripture referred to above, and as will be further explained. The Roman objection that not all Christians should be allowed to read the Scriptures, because the "laity" would stand in danger of interpreting the Scriptures according to their own thoughts and thus bringing false doctrines onto the path, is already invalid because experience shows that it is primarily the "clergy" and, as *primus omnium*, the Pope, who have interpreted the Scriptures according to their own meaning and have filled the church and the world with the most atrocious false doctrines.¹¹⁴³⁾

1142) *Loci, L. De Ecclesia*, § 121. Likewise Quenstedt, *Systema* I, 313.

1143) Rome consistently treats Scripture as a dangerous book. The reading of Scripture is to be permitted only to certain laymen, namely those to whom, in the judgment of the pastor or confessor, Scripture is not harmful. The main rules of the Roman Church are compiled in "*De Libris Prohibitis Regulae Decem per Patres a Tridentina Synodo Delectos Concinnatae et a Pio Papa IV. Comprobatae*", *regula IV.*: *Cum experimento manifestum sit, si Sacra Biblia vulgari lingua passim sine discrimine permittantur, plus inde, ob hominum temeritatem, detrimenti, quam utilitatis, oriri; hac in parte iudicio episcopi aut inquisitoris stetur: ut cum consilio parochi vel confessarii Bibliorum a catholice auctoribus versorum lectionem in vulgari lingua eis concedere possint, quos intellexerint ex huiusmodi lectione non damnum, sed fidei atque pietatis augmentum capere posse; quam facultatem in scriptis habeant. Qui autem absque tali facultate ea legere seu habere praesumpserint, nisi prius Bibliis ordinario redditus, peccatorum absolutionem percipere non possunt. Bibliopola.e vero, qui praedictam facultatem non habenti Biblia idiomate vulgari conscripta vendiderint, vel alio quovis modo concesserint, librorum pretium, in usus pios ab episcopo convertendum, amittant, aliisque poenis pro delicti qualitate eiusdem episcopi arbitrio subiaceant. Regulares vero nonnisi facultate a praelatis suis habita ea legere aut emere possunt.* [[Google](#)] (In Smets, p. 224.) In addition, the note of Clement VIII: *Animadvertendum est circa supra scriptam quartam regulam Indicis fel. rec. Pii papae IV, nullam per hanc impressionem et editionem de novo tribui facultatem episcopis, vel inquisitoribus aut regularium superioribus, concedendi licentiam emendi, legendi*

The relationship of the original text to the translations. Of course, the basic text has canonical authority also over the translations. The translations have authority only because and insofar as they reproduce the basic text. All translations have to put up with the fact that they are always examined anew to see whether they agree with the basic text. The fact that the Papal Church declared the Vulgate to be canonical belongs to the papal anti-Christian violence. However, the distance between the Scripture in the basic text and the Scripture in the translations should not be unduly increased. There are erroneous and dangerous addresses about this, especially in our time. As is well known, recent theologians fight against the inspiration of Scripture with an argument that goes like this: "Supposing the Scriptures to be entirely the inspired Word of God, this would be of no use to the Church, because the Church,

aut retinendi Biblia vulgari lingua edita; cum hactenus mandato et usu sanctae Romanae et universalis Inquisitionis sublata eis fuerit facultas concedendi huiusmodi licentias legendi vel retinendi Biblia vulgaria, aut alias Sacrae Scripturae tam Novi, quam Veteris Testamenti partes, quavis vulgari lingua editas, ac insuper summaria et compendia etiam historica eorumdem Biblicorum seu librorum Sacrae Scripturae, quocumque vulgari idiomate conscripta; quod quidem inviolate servandum est. [Google] (*Observatio circa Quartam Regulam. Cf. Index etc. Coloniae sumpt. B. Gualtheri 1602.*) And even earlier Gregory VII to Duke Wratislaw of Bohemia, who had asked for divine service, thus also for Bible use, in the vernacular: *Quia vero Nobilitas tua postulavit, quod secundum Sclavonicam linguam apud vos divinum celebrari annueremus officium, scias, nos huic petitioni tuae nequaquam posse favere. Ex hoc nempe saepe volentibus liquet, non immerito Sacram Scripturam omnipotenti Deo placuisse quibusdam locis esse occultam, ne, si ad liquidum cunctis pateret, forte vilesceret et subiaceret despectui aut, prave intellecta a mediocribus, in errorem in erroreret. Neque enim ad excusationem, iuvat, quod quidam religiosi viri hoc, quod simpliciter populus quaerit, patienter tulerunt, seu incorrectum dimiserunt; cum primitiva ecclesia multa dissimulaverit, quae a sanctis patribus, postmodum firmata Christianitate et religione crescente, subtili examinatione correctae sunt. Unde ne id fiat, quod a vestris imprudenter exposcitur, auctoritate b. Petri inhibemus, teque ad honorem omnipotentis Dei huic vanae temeritati viribus totis resistere praecipimus.* [Google] (Mansi XX, 296. Gieseler, Kirchengesch. II, 1, p. 257.) Cf. [Der Lutheraner 29, 73-90](#) the very thorough article written by Walther: "The Anti-Christian Papal Prohibition of Reading the Holy Scriptures in the Mother Tongue." In addition, [Günther, Symbolik 4, p. 112](#), on the papal condemnation of Bible societies.

1144) Trident, sessio IV, decretum de editione etc.. Smets, p. 15.

except for a small minority of its members, can use the Scriptures only through the medium of translations, and translations are to be regarded only as human understandings and expositions of the Scriptures. The argument is that, apart from a small minority of its members, Scripture can be used only through the medium of translations, and that translations are to be regarded only as human understandings and expositions of Scripture. With this argument Dr. Briggs also sought at the time to confuse the Presbyterian Commission of Inquiry.¹¹⁴⁵⁾ Henry E. Jacobs also expressed himself in this way: "It is only the Scriptures as written in the original languages that are inspired. Even the best translation is only a human explanation or interpretation of the inspired words, however well the inspired thought may be conveyed in other language."¹¹⁴⁶⁾ These words could be understood as if Bible translators were not allowed to call an English or German Bible God's Word, but had to offer it as a human conception of the Word of God. Against this it must be stated: Admittedly, even the best Bible translators are not inspired like the infallible apostles and prophets, and therefore their translations are and remain under the control of the original text and to that extent *norma normata*. This has been stressed to Rome also by our dogmatists. On the other hand, it must not be forgotten: What is the Word of God in Greek is also the Word of God in German or English, insofar as the German or English text is a true translation of the Greek text. We must keep in mind here the nature of Holy Scriptures. The language of Scripture is so simple, especially in the *sedes doctrinae*, that any translation that deserves the name of a translation at all must reproduce the basic text. Whoever understands the Greek of the New Testament on the one hand, and on the other hand, is proficient in the language into which he wants to translate, must make a special effort if he wants to deliver a translation that does not reproduce the basic text. For example, if we take the basic text of John 3:16 and the German or English or Latin translation side by side, we cannot escape the perception that the translations reflect the basic text and that we should not say of the translated passage that it is not the inspired Word of God, but only "a human explanation or interpretation" of the inspired text. John 3:16: Οντως ἡγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν νῖόν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστευὼν εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται,

1145) Cf. Dr. S. A. Farrand, The Other Side, pp. 17 sqq.

1146) Elements of Religion, 1898, p. 31 sq.

ἀλλ' ἐχρηζῶν αἰώνιον; "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life"; "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"; "*Sic Deus dilexit mundum, ut Filium suum unigenitum daret, ut omnis, qui credit in eum, non pereat, sed habeat vitam aeternam*" (Vulgate, ed. van Ess). To the objection that in such clear passages as Jn. 3:16 the translator cannot go astray, we answer with the greatest theologians of all times (Augustine, Luther, Chemnitz, Gerhard, etc.) that the whole Christian doctrine is revealed in such passages of Scripture that do not need any exposition, but to which access stands open to the learned and the unlearned alike, and in which therefore the translator cannot go astray, unless he has undertaken a deviation from the original. We stand before the fact that among the generally known translations of the Bible there is not a single one in which the Christian doctrine is not expressed in all parts and the errors opposed to it are rejected. This is also true with regard to the Vulgate of the Roman Church. The *ipsa conteret caput tuum* of the Vulgate, Gen. 3:15, is rejected by the correct translation of the many passages in which Christ is taught as the only deliverer from the guilt of sin and death, 1 Tim. 2:5-6: *Unus enim Deus, unus et Mediator Dei et hominum, homo Christus Iesus, qui dedit redemptionem semetipsum pro omnibus*, and Gal. 3:16: *Abraham dictae sunt promissiones et semini eius. Non dicit: "Et seminibus", quasi in multis, sed quasi in uno: "Et semini tuo", qui est Christus*. The Vulgate also clearly expresses the justification by faith alone, without works of the law; Rom. 3:28: *Arbitramur enim iustificari hominem per fidem, sine operibus legis* and Gal. 2:16: *Scientes autem, quod non iustificatur homo ex operibus legis, nisi per fidem Iesu Christi*. In its official confession, in the Tridentinum, the Roman Church curses indeed in several canons justification by faith, without works of the law; but it curses the doctrine which is also clearly taught in its official translation of the Bible, the Vulgate. Whoever, in a disputation with papists *disputandi causa*, agrees to the contract that the Vulgate shall be taken as a basis, still retains a weapon in his hand with which he can victoriously overcome the opponent. The same is true in

with reference to a dispute with Reformed on the basis of the English Bible translation (Authorized Version) [i.e. KJV]. Although the Reformed sects that walk in Zwingli's and Calvin's footsteps teach an immediate efficacy of the Holy Spirit without and alongside the means of grace, "efficacious grace acts immediately," the English Bible translation Rom. 10:17: "So, then, faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God," and 1 Pet. 1:23: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever," and in reference to baptism Tit. 3:5: "According to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration." The Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion is also clearly expressed in the English translation, Matt. 26:26-28: "Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Likewise in the parallels in Mark, Luke and Paul. The Reformed sects have separated themselves from the Lutheran Church and still keep themselves separated from it by rejecting doctrines which are unmistakably expressed in their own translation of the Bible. Thus, we would like to say, the Holy Scriptures defend themselves against false translations by their clear and simple expression. It is by divine institution a light which cannot easily be extinguished even by translation. We find confirmed what Luther says of the Scriptures, "There is no clearer book written on earth than the Holy Scriptures."¹¹⁴⁷⁾ We should not say, therefore, that even the best translations are merely a human conception or view of God's Word. No, in so far as the translations are really translations — and right translations are especially difficult to avoid in the *sedes doctrinae* — in so far as they are also God's Word itself. Walther therefore correctly says:¹¹⁴⁸⁾ "Even he who is ignorant of the basic languages can nevertheless be divinely certain that his German Bible is the Word of God, because he receives the testimony of the Holy Spirit through it." As the Scriptures in

¹¹⁴⁷⁾ [St. L. V., 334.](#)

¹¹⁴⁸⁾ [Synodal Report of the Northern District 1867, p. 34.](#)

the original text prove themselves to be the Word of God, so this is also done by a translation, provided it is a correct translation. Nor is there any lack of Scriptural proof of the fact that the Holy Scriptures do not lose the character of the infallible Word of God through translation. After all, according to Scripture, the infallible Word of the apostles and prophets is both the foundation of faith for all Christians in all places and among all peoples and tongues and languages until the Last Day, and the rule and guideline by which all Christians are to judge right and wrong doctrines. Since the great majority of Christians have the written Word of the apostles and prophets only in translations, it is beyond doubt that the Holy Scriptures need not lose the character of the infallible Word of God through translations. God's preserving hand is clearly evident not only with respect to the basic text, but also with respect to the translations. Just as we have a fixed Word of God in the basic text in spite of the *variae lectiones*, so we also have a fixed Word of God in the generally known translations, in spite of the fact that no Bible translation exists in which individual translation errors do not occur, and every Bible translation must allow itself to be tested again and again according to the basic text.

Since calls for new translations of the Bible have again been made recently, let us be permitted a twofold remark concerning Bible translations: 1. Just as all theologians who deny the vicarious satisfaction and inspiration of Scripture are excluded by divine order from the teaching office in the Christian Church, so such "theologians" may also be convinced that they have no calling to translate the Holy Scriptures. 2 We will have to be satisfied also in the future with Bible translations that do not place a false doctrine in passages that are difficult to translate, but offer a translation that is "analogous to the faith". What is to be understood by *analogia fidei* or *regula fidei* is to be explained in more detail under the section "Scripture and Exegesis". With regard to such translations, it may then turn out, as Luther puts it, at most that the translator had right thoughts in the wrong place. Such translations do no harm and will not be excluded in the future. That this does not do the slightest harm to the clarity of Scripture has already been explained in the section on the clarity of Scripture.

14. The use of scripture to decide doctrinal disputes. ^

As is well known, the Roman Church maintains that Holy Scriptures are incapable of deciding doctrinal disputes. Therefore, in order to establish and maintain doctrinal unity, it is necessary for the Church to have a visible head (*caput visibile*) or a visible representative of Christ (*vicarium Christi*), namely the Pope, who, by virtue of his Personal Authority, establishes the meaning of Scripture. Modern theology, too, through its denial of the infallible divine authority of Scripture, has come to abandon in principle the position of the Christian Church, according to which Scripture is *iudex controversiarum*. Representatives of modern theology declare with Zöckler: "As far as the handling of the Bible as normative and judicial authority in doctrinal controversies is concerned", "the possibility of only a partial and incomplete settlement of the dispute in question by the authority of Scripture must not infrequently be conceded".¹¹⁴⁹⁾ And from Volck of Dorpat we heard "that the interrogation of Scripture is not such an easy matter."¹¹⁵⁰⁾

On the other hand, we know from Scripture itself that both the teachers of the Church and all Christians in particular can and should use Scripture as *iudex controversiarum*. We have Christ's normative example for this. Christ, when tempted by the devil to believe falsely, overcame the devil's attack by saying, "It is written," and by citing the passages of Scripture pertaining to the matter in dispute, and retained the field. If we look first at the teachers of the church, it belongs to their office that they "shut up" the impudent and useless babblers, οὓς δει πιστομιζειν.¹¹⁵¹⁾ How? Of course, not with fisticuffs or with weapons that are in the same carnal field,¹¹⁵²⁾ but in such a way that they "hold whether the word that is certain and can teach" (ἀντέχεοθαι τον κατά την διδαχὴν πιστοῦ λόγου),¹¹⁵³⁾ or — which is the same thing — that they "hold to the example of the wholesome words" (νποτύπωσιν εχει ὕγαινότων λόγων) which they heard and learned from the apostles.¹¹⁵⁴⁾ Thus, in the hand of all teachers who are teachable (διδασκτικοί), the Holy Scriptures are an infallible arbiter

1149) *Handbook*² III, 151. 1150) *ibid.* I, 746.

1151) Tit. 1:10-11. 1152) 2 Cor. 10:3 ff.

1153) Tit. 1:9. 1154) 2 Tim. 1:13.

between truth and error. Neither does Scripture know anything of the Roman position that Scripture is of no use at all as a judge in doctrine, nor does it know anything of the modern-theological assertion that Scripture "not infrequently" fails as a norm of doctrine. And as for Christians in general, not only is the ability to judge in matters of Christian doctrine ascribed to them in Scripture,¹¹⁵⁵⁾ but it is expressly made their duty to distinguish between true and false prophets¹¹⁵⁶⁾ and also to supervise the ministry of their own teachers.¹¹⁵⁷⁾ According to what standard? Not according to their own thoughts, of course. For like all teachers, all Christians are bound to Jn. 8:31-32: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth," and to 1 Petr. 4:11: "If any man speak, that he speak it as the Word of God." Thus it is a truth unshakably established from Scripture that all and individual Christians can and should also use Scripture as *norma doctrinae* and as *iudex controversiarum*. Luther:¹¹⁵⁸⁾ "To know and to judge about doctrines belongs before all and every Christian, and that in such a way that he is cursed who offends such right by one little bit."

For the decision of doctrinal disputes, of course, as our ancient theologians constantly remind us, two things are necessary: 1. The point in dispute (*status controversiae*) must be precisely determined, 2. The precisely determined point in dispute must be placed in the light of the scriptural passages that deal with the point in dispute. Then Scripture decides the dispute with the greatest clarity and certainty. Not, of course, in such a way as outwardly to compel the acceptance of its decision, and outwardly to shut the mouth of the objector, but certainly in such a way as inwardly to convince and win approval, as happened with the servants of the high counsel,¹¹⁵⁹⁾ or in such a way as to put him who holds his objection in danger of becoming an αντοκατάκραος.¹¹⁶⁰⁾ Baier aptly describes the state of affairs thus:¹¹⁶¹⁾ *Quamvis Scriptura Sacra vi externa non cogat homines in sua decisione acquiescere quoad λόγον τον εξω, seu ne*

1155) Jn. 6:45.

1156) Matt. 7:15; Rom. 16:17.

1157) Col. 4:17.

1158) St. L. XIX, 341.

1159) Jn. 7:46.

1160) Tit. 3:10-11.

1161) Baier-Walther 1, 186.

quid actu externo obloquantur, tamen quando aperta est sententia Scripturae tamquam vocis divinae, certum est animos hominum quoad λόγον τον εσω convinci, ut, nisi reclamante conscientia, nihil excipere possint. [[Google](#)] Hence, then, it is said of Scripture that it speaks, bears witness, accuses, judges, resolves under sin, closes its mouth, etc.¹¹⁶²⁾ To the objection of the papists that Scripture is a "dumb book" that cannot address, judge and decide. The old theologians used to answer: "Scripture is not silent except in the papacy, where its mouth is forbidden" (*Scriptura Sacra non muta nisi in. papatu, ubi prohibetur loqui*). Moreover, they point out to the Roman theologians, who wanted to keep the Scriptures as the Word of God, that it is really not evident why a decision cannot be given by the words of the Scriptures just as much as by the words or letters of the Pope, unless one seriously wants to assume that the Scriptures as "God's letter" to mankind are less capable than the letters of the Pope. With particular diligence and emphasis, the Roman theologians defended themselves against the doctrine of the Scriptures, that also the "laity" could and should judge in matters of doctrine on the basis of the Scriptures. They referred to passages of Scripture in which Christians are figuratively called "sheep," such as John 10:16: "I have other sheep, which are not of this fold." But Jn. 21:16-17 seemed to be especially conclusive to them, where Christ speaks to Peter: "Feed my sheep!" To this our theologians replied: Christians are indeed compared to sheep in Scripture, but not to stupid sheep, but to wise ones who know exactly how to distinguish Christ's voice from the voice of the stranger and the pseudo-shepherd. Jn. 10:4-5: "When he [the right shepherd] has left out his sheep, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice (οἶδασιν την φωνήν αυτον). But a stranger they do not follow, but flee from him (φενξονται απ' αυτον), for they do not know the stranger's voice."

1162) Jn. 19:24; Rom. 3:21; Jn. 5:45; 12:48; Gal. 2:22; Rom. 3:19. Holtzmann, *Neutestamentl. Theologie II*, 297, correctly remarks with regard to the apostle Paul that he obviously "personifies" the scripture and lets it speak "directly to the Christian presence". Holtzmann, of course, attributes this to "the Jewish view" of the apostle, "according to which the theopneusty is directly ascribed to the Scriptures themselves."

V. 27: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (ἀκολουθοῦσίν μοί).¹¹⁶³⁾

1163) Gerhard, Loci, L. De Ministerio Eccles., § 88: *Ex ovibus non facimus pastores, sed iubemus, ut sint ac maneant oves; interim nolumus eas esse brutas oves, quae non possint nec debeant discernere inter pastores et lupos.* [Google] Gerhard refutes the main arguments with which Rome denies to the "laity" the ability and right to judge the doctrines according to Scripture. We place the longer passage here, as it is also reported in [Baier-Walther I, 188 sq.](#): *Regerit Bellarminus: "Populus, cum sit rudis, non potest aliter iudicare de doctrina pastoris quam ex collatione cum doctrina praedecessorum et ordinariorum pastorum." Resp.: Hoc falsum esse, ostendit exemplum Beroensium, qui quotidie scrutabantur Scripturas, sedulo inquirentes, an haec ita se haberent, quae a Paulo et Barnaba proferebantur, Act. 17:11; regulam iudicii statuebant non doctrinam ordinariorum pastorum, sed Scripturas Sacras, quo nomine a Spiritu Sancto commendantur. Ruditas illa populi, de qua Bellarminus loquitur, in papatu originem ducit ex prohibitione legendi scripturam Sacram, pro quo sacrilegio gravem olim reddent rationem illius auctores. Invertimus autem Bellarmini argumentum: Si ruditas populi non obstat, quominus possit doctrinam pastorum conferre cum doctrina praedecessorum vel ordinariorum pastorum, utique etiam non obstat, quominus doctrinam pastorum conferre possit cum doctrina Christi, prophetarum et apostolorum, in Scripturis proposita, et iuxta hanc normam verum prophetam a falso discernere.* [Google] *Sed verum prius; ergo et posterius. Connexio maioris probatur, quia Christus, prophetae et apostoli tam perspicue docere possunt et vere etiam tam perspicue docuerunt, quam ordinarii pastores. Cum Christus, prophetae et apostoli docendi ministerio in his terris fungerentur, non eruditis solum, sed etiam rudi populo praedicarunt, atque eo quidem modo, ut doctrinam ipsorum intelligere possent; quomodo igitur scripta prophetarum et apostolorum adeo essent obscura et perplexa, ut ex illis de doctrina rudis populus iudicare omnino nequeat? Certe non alia, sed eadem scripserunt prophetae et apostoli, quae viva voce praedicarunt. — "At," inquit Bellarminus, "si populus per se posset iudicare de doctrina pastoris, non egeret praedicatoribus." Resp.: Quae vero in hac illatione συνέφειν? Utrumque a Deo mandatum: ut scilicet populus iudicet de doctrina pastoris, quod ipse Bellarminus antea disertis verbis illi concessit, et ut nihilominus sint certi et ordinarii in ecclesia ministri, "non enim omnes doctores," 1 Cor. 12:29; Eph. 4:11.* [Google] *Aliud est, inquirere in veritatem doctrinae et haereses ab orthodoxia, pseudoprophetas a veris doctoribus discernere, quae vocatio generalis est, ad omnes Christianos pertinens; aliud, publice in ecclesia docere, quae est vocatio specialis. Ex ovibus non facimus pastores, sed iubemus, ut sint ac maneant oves; interim nolumus eas esse brutas oves, quae non possint nec debeant discernere inter pastores et lupos. Pontificii ex auditoribus suis faciunt brutas oves, quae sine ulla discretione sequantur pastorem, si vel maxime ad noxia deducat pascua vel etiam in lupum vertatur; faciunt ex auditoribus psittacos a nutu praelatorum pendentes, ex praelatis*

If it stands clear from Scripture that all disputes in matters of Christian doctrine can and should be decided by Scripture, then the question arises why disputations and colloquia have in most cases been without result. The answer has already been hinted at in a few words at the beginning of this section. If the *status controversiae* is either not established at all or — which happens even more often — is abandoned after it has been established, the participants keep talking about different things, and agreement is impossible. Likewise, if the disputed point is not brought into the light of Holy Scriptures at all, there is a futile effort to reach agreement. This happens when "exposition" takes the place of the words of Scripture themselves, or when Scripture texts are cited,

angelos, qui plane sint infallibiles et ἀνυψωθῆναι. ... Ratio, quam Bellarminus addit, est plane antichristiana: "Cum pastor ordinarius (inquit) et aliquis alius, qui praedicat, non vocatus, contraria docent, debet omnino populus pastorem suum potius sequi quam illum alterum, qui non est pastor, etiamsi forte contingeret, ut pastor erraret." At falsum est, quod pastorem ordinarium etiam errantem populus sequi debeat; hoc enim nihil aliud est, quam iubere, ut oves etiam ad noxia pascua suum sequantur pastorem, ut tenebras Christiani praeferant luci, errores veritati, humanas constitutiones divinae auctoritati. [Google] Subiicit quidem Bellarminus, "non esse credibile, Deum esse permissurum, ut ordinarius pastor ita erret, ut decipiat simplicem populum"; sed frustra disputatur, an fieri possit, de quo manifeste constat, quod factum sit; ordinarios pastores saepius errasse et simplicem populum decepisse, absque insigni impudentia negari nequit. Hic ergo urgemus Bellarminum et quaerimus, an ordinarios pastores etiam errantes populus sequi debeat. Si affirmative responderet, manifestum faciet, se operam venalem locasse ei, qui in "Si papa" dist. 40., sic rugit: "Si papa, suae et fraternae salutis immemor, negligens deprehenditur, inutilis et remissus in operibus suis et insuper a bono taciturnus, quod magis officit sibi, et nihilominus omnibus, innumerabiles populos catervatim secum ducat, primo mancipio gehennae, cum ipso plagis multis in aeternum vapulatueros: huius culpas istic redarguere praesumat mortalium nullus; quia cunctos ipse iudicaturus, a nemine est iudicandus."
 [Google] Here belong also the well-known words of Luther (St. L. X, 1542 f.): "All the warning that St. Paul does Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 10:15; Gal. 3:4. 5; Col. 2:8 and all the sayings of the prophets, where they teach to avoid the doctrines of men, do nothing else but take the right and authority to judge all doctrines from the teachers and impose them on the hearers with a serious commandment for the loss of souls, so that they not only have the right and authority to judge everything that is preached, but are guilty of judging by the disgrace of divine majesty. That we may see by this how the tyrants have dealt so unchristianly with us, in that they have taken from us such right and commandment, and given it to themselves."

but those that deal with a different doctrine. The latter happened and happens especially often. Thus it was and is demanded that the doctrine of the Lord's Supper should not be taken from the words of the Lord's Supper but from John 6, that the doctrine of election to salvation should not be decided from the scriptural words dealing with election but from John 3:16, and so on. Modern theology even demands that the individual doctrines are to be drawn from the "whole of Scripture". This nonsensical and impossible method, recommended and adopted by the "reformer of the nineteenth century" (Schleiermacher), is called the "deeper view of Scripture," while at the same time the old theologians are said to have cut Scripture into matters with their demand that every doctrine be taken from the passages of Scripture in which it is revealed. It is obvious that in these cases Scripture does not speak at all, but is bound by a principle outside of Scripture, just as in the papacy. Any agreement in these and all similar cases is naturally excluded. This subject is to be taken up again under the section "Scripture and Exegesis".

15. The authority of scripture and the symbols. ^

To its symbols the Lutheran Church does not confess doctrines outside and besides Scripture, but precisely those doctrines revealed in Scripture. Because in the course of time attempts were made to spread doctrines contrary to Scripture in the church by calling on Scripture, the church was compelled to state and confess what is Scriptural doctrine in the face of error. These are the confessional writings or symbols of the church. The symbols of the orthodox church can be appropriately called the church's yes to the doctrine of the Scriptures in contrast to the no of the false teachers. That the orthodox church does not place in her symbols a second norm beside the Scriptures, she proves also clearly with the fact that she commits with "*quia*" to her symbols, that is, she commits her teachers to the doctrines contained in the symbols, not because they stand in the symbols, but because they stand in the Scriptures. As for the commitment with "*quatenus*," one has to wonder that anyone could seriously advocate this form of commitment. Very correctly Johann Georg Walch remarks

in his introduction to the symbolic books, that with the restriction "*quatenus*" one could also be committed to the Koran or the [Racovian Catechism](#).¹¹⁶⁴⁾ If someone wants to justify the *quatenus* by saying that he does not yet know exactly what is truth according to Scripture and how far the symbolic books express this truth, it must be remembered that such a person should not yet act as a teacher in the Church, but should still be learning. To speak of compulsion of conscience, which is supposed to lie in the obligation to the symbols, already makes no sense because no one is forced into the office of preaching or teacher. As a rule, only such people speak of compulsion of conscience who have gotten away from the Word of God, but are not averse to bringing their own thoughts to man at the expense of a Christian congregation. [Walther](#) says:¹¹⁶⁵⁾ "The fact that the voice is committed by the congregation to the Word of God and the church confession is owed to the congregation as a guarantee that he will not preach his own wisdom, but the pure Christian doctrine publicly and especially, and will not lord it over their faith." It is also obvious that with a *quatenus* commitment the church declares its own confession to be possibly erroneous and thus cancels its confession as a confession.

Quatenus commitment has occurred in several forms.

1. In the form that the symbols present an "essentially correct" representation of the "main teachings". Here it is left to the arbitrariness of the individual what he understands by "main doctrines", and further, what he understands by "essentially correct" basic doctrines.¹¹⁶⁶⁾

2. In the form that the symbols are to be understood "historically". The meaning of this form is that the confession of the symbols does not go to all doctrines present in the symbols, but is to be limited to those doctrines about which the church was compelled to speak by a doctrinal struggle that arose in its midst. Such doctrines present in the Confession and more detailed explanations which go beyond the "historical occasion" are not to be regarded as belonging to the substance of the Confession. It is obvious that with this "historical conception" of the symbols it is up to the subjective discretion of the individual

1164) *Introductio in Libros Symb.* II, 2, § 11. 1165) *Pastorale*, [p. 52](#).

1166) Cf. [F. Bente](#), *American Lutheranism II*, [39](#) sq., on the "doctrinal basis of the General Synod prior to 1864."

what he regards or does not regard as "historically caused". If we wanted to make the binding nature of a confessional doctrine dependent on the fact that it must be the result of a struggle conducted within the church, we would perhaps be in the position of having to delete the eleventh article of the Formula of Concord as binding. As is well known, the Formula of Concord remarks on this article that "among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession there has not yet occurred any public, vexatious, and extensive discord concerning the eternal election of the children of God". Only because there had been disputes about it in other places and "something of it" had been aroused among the ignorant, so a presentation of this article was indicated, in order to prevent "in the future among our descendants" a disagreement and division in this article."¹¹⁶⁷) Furthermore, in the "historical" view of the symbols, someone would consider himself justified in putting even the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture on the free list, because this doctrine has not gone through a struggle, nor is there a special article about it in the Confession, but Scripture and the Word of God are "identified" only incidentally, and only incidentally everything in the Confession is based on Scripture as the Word of God. That newer theologians comfort themselves with these facts in their denial of the inspiration of Scripture has already been mentioned earlier.

3. In the form that the symbols were to be accepted provided they were interpreted and understood "according to Scripture" or "rightly". With this limitation, Reformed theologians, Calvin included, subscribed to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.¹¹⁶⁸) A Lutheran pastoral conference in Germany also made the suggestion to the Missouri Synod fathers that they would like the Lutheran Confession to be "understood according to the guidance of Scripture and the contrast fought each time."¹¹⁶⁹) This sounds pious and scriptural, but is in fact a decisive rejection of the purpose of our symbols. After all, the purpose of committing to the symbols is not to determine whether someone wants to make an attempt to understand our symbols "according to Scripture," but rather the Lutheran congregations want to determine if the pastor or

¹¹⁶⁷) M. 704 [[Trigl. 1062](#) 

¹¹⁶⁸) The evidence in [Walther](#): "Why are the symbolic books of our church to be signed by those who want to become ministers of it, not conditionally, but unconditionally?" St. Louis, Mo., 1858, pp. 6 ff. [[1858 Fourth Western District Convention, English translated into "Why Should Our Pastors, Teachers and Professors Subscribe Unconditionally to the Symbolical Writings of Our Church," CTM 18-4 \(1947\) pp. 241-253; see \[here\]\(#\) for other publications; see also Walther's *Pastoraltheologie* p. 53\]](#)

¹¹⁶⁹) [Der Lutheraner 10, p. 90.](#)

candidate has already recognized what Scripture doctrine is and therefore also finds in the Lutheran Confession the expression of his own faith and confession.

4. In the form that the symbols are not to be understood according to the "letter" but according to the "spirit". Under this self-imposed condition, the rationalists gladly allowed themselves to be committed to all the symbols of the Lutheran church. By "spirit" they understood their own spirit, which translated the essence of Christianity into a pagan moral teaching.

All the above-mentioned and other *quatenus* formulas, as I said, defeat the purpose of the symbols, because they leave in doubt what and how much those who are committed to the confession of the congregations accept or do not accept from this confession. The *quatenus* obligations already, if we consider it rightly, come into opposition to natural respectability and sincerity. incidentally, experience proves that the demand of conditional obligation to the symbols is in the vast majority of cases based on a rejecting position against certain confessional doctrines. This is also true with regard to those Lutherans of our time who advocate a conditional commitment to the confession because they take a doctrinal position that deviates from the confession, e.g. in the doctrine of the church, of the ministry, of chiliasm, even in the doctrine of the Antichrist.

It has been objected against the unconditional commitment to the Confessions that this commitment could not possibly refer to the historical, natural-historical and other purely external remarks that are scattered in the Confessions. Let us not make a clear thing dark! The obligation, as the nature of a churchly confession implies, refers to the doctrines present in the confession. In the Christian church everything depends on the doctrines. — It has been objected against the unconditional obligation that it cannot refer to "all exegetical proofs". This, too, is conceded by those who resolutely advocate an unconditional obligation. We admit that besides the passages of Scripture which prove a doctrine to be a doctrine of Scripture, passages are cited here and there which do not belong in this place but elsewhere. But what we maintain is this, that no doctrine is found in the Confession for which there is not sufficient scriptural evidence.

We add that the Scriptural proof of the confession can be considered a model of proof from Scripture, since the confession does not bother much with "exegesis" — as exegesis is usually understood today — but, to speak with Luther, lets the *nuda Scriptura*, without much exposition, come on the scene. More about this in the following section, "Scripture and Exegesis".¹¹⁷⁰⁾

1170) On the point of what an unconditional commitment to the Confession does and does not include, we find in Dr. Walther's paper [1858 Western District]: "Why are the symbolic books of our church ... not to be signed conditionally, but unconditionally?" the following exposition: "Since the symbols are confessions of the faith or the doctrine of the church and should and want to be nothing else, nothing else can be understood by an unconditional signature than the solemn explanation given to the church in lieu of an oath by a person entering the church service that he has recognized precisely the doctrinal content of the symbolic books of our church, but this without any exception, as not disputing with the Holy Scriptures in any point (neither in a main nor in a secondary point), but as absolutely agreeing with the same; that he therefore believes in it as in divine truth itself from the heart and thus wants to preach this doctrine unadulterated. Whatever position any doctrine may occupy in the doctrinal system of the symbols and in whatever form it may occur therein, be it as a subject treated *ex-pressso* or as an incidental remark: the unconditional signature given refers to each of them; none of them is thereby stipulated by the signer. Far from excluding, for example, those doctrines which are used in the symbols only for the proofs contained therein, these are to be regarded as doctrines which are considered by our Church to be absolutely irrevocable doctrinal foundations, and are held by her as such, the joyful acknowledgment of which is therefore presupposed above all others by those who sign the symbols. However, keeping in mind that the symbols are creeds or doctrines, the Church, on the contrary, must necessarily exclude everything that does not concern doctrine from the circle of what the signing of the symbols refers to. For example, just as he who signs the symbols of the Church as his symbols without any condition does not declare them to be a rule and guideline of German or Latin orthography or of a perfect style, neither does his signature refer to any other things that belong to the field of human science. If, for example in the sixth article of the Augsburg Confession a passage from an ancient exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, further in the twentieth article (of the Latin text) a passage from the writing "On the Calling of the Heathen" as a saying of Ambrose, further in the eighteenth article of the same confession a passage from the ancient writing "Hypognostikon" as a saying of Augustine: So, of course, he who subscribes to the Augsburg Confession does not commit himself to consider Ambrose and Augustine

To designate the relationship between the Holy Scriptures and the symbols of the orthodox Church, the following terms have been used: *norma* and *norma normata*, *norma primaria* and *norma secundaria*. Both *termini* express that the symbols are a norm, not in themselves (*absolute*), but only in certain respects (*secundum quid*), namely derivatively, because the doctrines which the symbols profess are taken from Scripture.¹¹⁷¹ On the practical

as the authors of those writings, because they are quoted in the above-mentioned confession under their names, if it were not known that even the draftsman of this basic confession of ours knew quite well that the cited writings are quoted only under that name, without the authorship of those writings being decisively attributed to them. But just as the servant of the church is not bound by that which falls into the realm of criticism, neither is he bound by anything that belongs to the realm of history in terms of the content of the symbol. — And even more. In a similar relationship stands also the exposition, which is given in the symbol of individual scriptural passages. The Holy Apostle Paul himself states as the only absolutely necessary requirement of an unobjectionable 'prophecy' or exposition of the Scriptures: If anyone has prophecy, let it be analogy of faith', Rom. 12:7. From this Johann Gerhard draws the canon of interpretation: 'Even if we do not reach the actual and special meaning of all passages, it is sufficient that in the exposition of them nothing be brought forward against the analogy of faith'. If, then, an interpreter did not grasp the particular meaning of some passage in the Bible, but took it to mean that his exposition had its basis in other clear passages of Scripture, he might be mistaken in thinking that a certain doctrine was contained in a certain passage, but he was not mistaken in the doctrine. Therefore, even he who subscribes unconditionally to the symbolic books declares only that all the expositions contained in them are 'analogous to faith'. — Since, furthermore, the proof of a doctrine can be imperfect, although not only the doctrine to be proved or the final sentence itself rests on irrefutable, divine grounds, but also the doctrines used for the proof or the upper and lower sentence have their correctness, so also an unconditional signature by no means includes the recognition, that no proof given in the symbolic books for the pure doctrine is capable of perfection, or in other words, that the form, the method and the process of proof are also perfect and therefore every faithful minister is bound to use the method followed in the symbols and no other method. Not otherwise do our fathers judge of an unconditional subscribing to the symbols."

1171) Chemnitz, *Loci*. Wittenb. 1623, III, 235: *Symbola non sunt aliquid extra aut contra Scripturam, sed sunt ipsa medulla Scripturae. Atque ita nos etiam dicimus, nos accipere Sacram Scripturam in eo sensu, qui traditus est in veris et probatis veteris ecclesiae symbolis*. ["Symbols are not something outside or against Scripture, but are the very core of Scripture. And so we also say that we accept the Holy Scriptures in the sense that it was handed down in the true and proven symbols of the old church."]

The expression *norma decisionis* and *norma discretionis* (decisive norm - discriminating norm) looks at the practical use or purpose of the symbols, that is, Scripture alone decides whether a doctrine is right or wrong; but from the position that someone takes on the symbols of the Lutheran Church, we know whether the same has recognized and accepts the doctrine of Scripture or not (*norma discretionis discernit orthodoxos ab heterodoxis*).¹¹⁷²⁾

When Mylius († 1607) and Hutter († 1616) and some later Lutheran theologians addressed the inspiration of the Lutheran symbols, they did not want to put the symbols on an equal footing with Scripture, but only to express that a special assistance of the Holy Spirit could be perceived in the composition of the symbols. That Mylius and Hutter only in this sense (*sensu latiori*) addressed an inspiration of the symbols, Hollaz proves from their own words.¹¹⁷³⁾ Another question is whether Mylius' and Hutter's way of speaking, even with the attached provisos, is to be recommended for imitation. It is surely better to reserve the term θεόπνευστος for the writings of the apostles and prophets. Walther adds to the quotation from Hollaz:¹¹⁷⁴⁾ *Schelvigius et I. G. Neumannus itidem libros symbolicos θεόπνευστους vocari posse contendunt, iure dissentientibus Loeschero* ["Schelvigius and I. G. Neumann argue that the symbolic books can also be called θεόπνευστους, rightly disagreeing with Loescher"] (*vid. Innocent Nachrr. 1707, p. 117; 1710, p. 414. 735*), *Carpzovio (Isag., p. 3), aliis.*¹¹⁷⁵⁾

1172) Cf. the compilations on terminology in Walch, *Introd. in Libr. Symb.*, Jena 1732, p. 932 sqq. [Baier-Walther I, 139 sqq.](#)

1173) *Examen, Proleg.* II. qu. 27. 1174) [Baier-Walther I, 140 sq.](#)

1175) Cf. about the position on the symbols the already quoted writing of Walther: "Answer to the question: Why are the symbolic books of our church not to be signed conditionally but unconditionally by those who want to become servants of it? A paper published by the German Ev.-Lüth. Synod of Missouri, Ohio, & a. St. [Western District Adopted Paper.](#)" [St. Louis, Mo., 1858](#). Of all the writings known to us, this paper of only twenty pages deals most thoroughly with the question in address. On the same subject is referred: "Expert opinion of the Dorpat theological faculty on the questions submitted to it by the German Lutheran Synod of Iowans in North America concerning the church doctrinal consensus," 1866, signed by Professors T. Harnack, Kurtz, von Öttingen, M. von Engelhardt, W. Volck. Cf. also, "[Public Colloquy held November 13-19, 1867, between the representatives of the Synod of Missouri, Ohio, &c. St., and the Synod of Iowans.](#)" Milwaukee, Wis., 1868. [[WorldCat](#); partial text [here](#); See also [this publication of same meeting by Rev. Beyer \(Chicago\)](#)] An assessment

16. Scripture and exegesis. ^

The basis of all exegetical activity, whether we understand by it in general the unfolding of the content of Scripture¹¹⁷⁶⁾ or in particular the explanation or the attempt to explain difficult passages,¹¹⁷⁷⁾ is the fact that the whole Christian doctrine is revealed in such passages of Scripture to which access stands open to scholars and unlearned alike, which therefore need no exegesis in the sense of explaining obscurities. Without this, the Scriptures would not be a lamp to all Christians and a

of the Dorpat report in L. u. W. 1867, p. 257 ff. — From the modern-theological point of view, the nature and validity of the symbols is treated, e.g., by Nitzsch-Stephan under the section “Das Verhältnis des Protestantismus zur Tradition”, p. 282 ff. For modern theology, the terminology discussed above: *norma*, stated by Scripture, and *norma normata*, stated by the symbols of the Church, has no meaning at all. Because modern theology has abandoned Scripture as the infallible Word of God, it has in principle abandoned the distinction between Scripture and symbols and other religious writings. Scripture has degenerated into *norma normata* for them. *Norma normans* is for her the "Christian experience", the pious self-consciousness of the theologizing subject. If modern theologians, in their denial of the inspiration of Scripture and of *satisfactio vicaria*, wanted to be committed to the symbols of the Lutheran Church, this would have to be taken as a mockery, because the whole doctrinal content of the symbols is based on the fundamental doctrines mentioned. A very understandable article on the commitment to the symbols is found in RE. ² XV, p. 86 f. The article, signed by Dr. von Burger †, agrees for the most part with Dr. Walther's paper. In particular, Burger opposes the theological professors who demand "freedom of teaching" in order to fight the confession of the church from here. Burger also refutes the senseless assertion that the obligation to the symbols includes a compulsion of conscience.

1176) The so-called *enarratio*, like Luther's *Enarrationes in Genesin*. Thus, in old orders for the examination of candidates for the ministry, it is said that it is to be investigated whether the candidate, in addition to a sure knowledge of all articles of Christian doctrine, also has the grace "to expose the Scriptures," which is "the gift and ability to teach others also," that is, the ability to present the doctrine of Scripture in the public ministry. This usage has also been preserved among our German-American Christian people when they say in reference to the sermon of their pastor, "Our pastor has a good exposition of Scripture." Cf. Walther, *Pastorale*, p. 63.

1177) In this narrower sense Quenstedt 1, 199 grasps the "interpretation of Scripture" when he says: *Scripturae est, qua genuinus illius sensus, menti ac intentioni Spiritus Sancti conveniens in locis difficilioribus, dextre adhibitis mediis et regulis hermeneuticis, inquiritur et ostenditur.* ["It is the Scriptures, by which the true sense of that, suitable to the mind and intention of the Holy Spirit, is investigated and shown in the more difficult places, by rightly used means and hermeneutic rules."]

light on their path, and not all Christians would be able to recognize their faith as correct from the Scriptures and to distinguish false teachers from the right ones in the light of the Scriptures and to avoid them. Therefore, the great teachers of the church, such as Augustine, Luther, Chemnitz, etc., have held to the God-ordained nature of Scripture, according to which Scripture presents the entire Christian doctrine in all its parts in such passages from which obscurities cannot be removed only with the help of exegesis. The evidence from Augustine, etc., was already given in the description of the clarity of Scripture (p. 391). [Luther's](#) admonition is also based on this nature of Scripture: "He who cannot understand the dark, let him stay with the light."¹¹⁷⁸⁾ No one need fear that he will fall short of any doctrine of faith or life.

Good papists and bad Protestants have objected that the special gift of interpreting the Scriptures, which God gives to some Christians before others, is not used. The objection is not valid. The special gift of Scripture interpretation finds a wide sphere of activity in spite of the complete clarity of Scripture in the sense just described. First, it stands as [Harleß](#) puts it in his preface to Luther's exposition of the 17th chapter of the Gospel of St. John:¹¹⁷⁹⁾ "Though the Word of God in itself needs no interpreting [exposition], yet our hard hearts and deaf ears stand in need of the voice of heralds and pastors in the wilderness. And this, again, not as if Christ's words were too high and too low, too dark and too mysterious for human senses, but because, as Luther rightly recognized, we men, in our cranky striving for false heights, slip over the divine simplicity of Christ's words like the blind or the dull." Therefore, the real task of the exegete is to hold the erratic human spirit to the simple word of Scripture and, where it has already deviated from it, to lead it back to the simple word of Scripture. As Luther says of all his writings, and especially of his exegetical writings, that their sole purpose is to lead back to the Scriptures, and indeed to lead back to the Scriptures in such a way that every Christian and

1178) [St. L. V, 338](#). 1179) Leipzig 1857, p. V.


every teacher stands with his faith on the bare word of Scripture, on the nuda Scriptura, minus "gloss". By "gloss", however, Luther does not merely mean the wrong exegesis, as has been thought, but every exposition, including the correct one. Therefore, as is well known, Luther repeatedly expresses the wish that all his books should perish, so that Christians would base their faith on the nuda Scriptura, without exposition, because all exposition is necessarily darker than the Scripture itself and therefore every exposition must be examined again to see whether it can stand before the clearer light of the Scripture. "There is no clearer book written on earth than the Holy Scriptures; they are to all other books as the sun is to all lights." ¹¹⁸⁰⁾ Fortunately, Luther's wish that all his books would perish so that the nuda Scriptura would retain sole dominion did not come true. For his writings not only have the purpose, but are actually of such a nature, that they lead the fluttering human mind to the bare Scripture, without exposition, and thereby hold it fast, so that every Christian, and especially every Christian standing in a public teaching office, can speak with Luther: "The word they shall let stand." By this word Luther understands the nuda Scriptura. Such *manuductio ad nudam Scripturam* was not only needed in Luther's time. The church needs it at all times until the Last Day, because men at all times are and will be inclined "to slip over the divine simplicity of the words of the Scriptures in cranky striving for false heights like blind or dull-witted people." Thus our time also needs such exegetes — they need not be professional theologians in every case — who, by God's grace, possess four qualities in particular: 1. They hold the Scriptures to be God's own Word and treat them accordingly; 2. they hold the Scriptures to be clear according to the testimony of the Scriptures concerning themselves; 3. they let all their activity be absorbed in *manuductio ad nudam Scripturam*; 4. they expose the fraud that is present every time men, under the pretense of "exegesis," seek to shed the necessary light on the Scriptures through their human thoughts. As Zwingli asserted, "the very noblest words, concerning the eternal Godhead and the true humanity of Jesus Christ," had to be "sent through figures

1180) Luther on the 37th Psalm. [St. L. V, 334](#).

and tropes into the right sense, which is inviolable to the faith."¹¹⁸¹) Modern theologians also claim that Scripture is to be "subordinated" to "faith" as the supreme principle in theology. By "faith" they understand the pious self-consciousness of the human individual doing theology.¹¹⁸²) This brings us to the abuse that has been committed in ancient and modern times with the interpretation of Scripture "according to faith" or "according to the analogy of faith". The exegete must clearly recognize this abuse, and in the exposure of this abuse he finds, on the other hand, his reason for being. To be sure, Scripture is to be interpreted according to the "analogy of faith." But the expression is used in a double, quite different sense and therefore also with quite different results. Understood in the right sense, it serves the exposition of Scripture; understood in the wrong sense, it serves the complete subversion of Scripture.

Luther and the old theologians who remained with him on the right path understand by the analogy of faith the clear passages of Scripture that do not need any exposition but shine in their own light. In the compilation of such scriptural passages we have the "analogy" or the "rule of faith." Thus the Apology¹¹⁸³) defines the rule of faith when it says, "*Ceterum exempla* (like the life of the Rechabites) *iuxta regulam, hoc est, iuxta Scripturas certas et claras ... interpretari convenit*. ["Moreover, it is appropriate to interpret examples according to the rule, that is, according to certain and clear Scriptures."] Luther reminds:¹¹⁸⁴) "Therefore it is to be known that Scripture without all gloss is the sun and all light, from which all teachers received their light, and not again." He teaches that both doctrine and argument must be done "with clear passages, as with a bare drawn sword, without all glosses and expositions." Such clear passages are the rule according to which every right teacher must interpret dark passages of Scripture as far as he is able. "The holy fathers," says Luther,¹¹⁸⁵) "have the way of interpreting Scripture that they take bright, clear passages and thus make the dark

1181) Thus Zwingli in his answer to Luther's writing "That these Words" etc. Zwingli's entire writing is printed in the St. Louis edition of Luther's works, [St. L. XX, 1122 ff.](#) The quoted words of Zwingli stand [XX, 1196](#).

1182) Seeberg, [Dogmengesch.² II, 289](#). 1183) M., p. 284, 60 [[Trigl 441, 60](#) ].

1184) [St. L. XVIII. 1293](#).

1185) [St. L. XX. 856](#).

wavering passages clear." Such "Bright, clear passages" are, of course, found in Scripture where Scripture deals with the individual doctrines, in the so-called *sedes doctrinae*. Quenstedt:¹¹⁸⁶⁾ *Observandum, quemlibet articulum fidei in Sacra Scriptura habere propriam suam et nativam sedem, ex qua debet iudicari*. In this way, the principle remains: *Scriptura ex Scriptura explicanda est*. ["It must be observed that every article of faith in the Holy Scriptures has its proper and native seat, from which it must be judged."] Luther:¹¹⁸⁷⁾ "So Scripture is its own light. This is fine when Scripture interprets itself. Therefore, do not believe the Pope's lies and freely consider as dark what is not proven by clear passages of the Biblia. Thus we must first eliminate this error, because it is almost deeply entrenched, that the Scriptures are dark and must be illuminated by the teachings of men. Which is an excellent error and a blasphemy, and actually means to lead the Holy Spirit to the school, or to speak doctrines first."

A completely opposite concept of "faith" or of the "analogy of faith" is held by all those who do not let the "*certae et clarae Scripturae*", the "bright, clear sayings of Scripture", be the analogy or rule of faith, but understand by it a concept of faith which they have taken from their own thoughts, setting aside the bright, clear sayings, and which they then regard as the light by which the clear passages of Scripture, which need no exposition at all, are to be illuminated. Such exegetes were the sacramentarians. In order not to be overcome by the Scriptures, but to be able to keep their own thoughts about the Lord's Supper, they made the suggestion that Luther should refrain from the Scriptural passages that deal with the Lord's Supper and establish the doctrine of the Lord's Supper with them from John 6. Modern theologians put themselves in the same class of exegetes. In order not to be able to teach and rebuke from Scripture, but, undisturbed by Scripture, to make "pious self-consciousness" the source and norm of theology, they take refuge in the "whole of Scripture" under the leadership of Schleiermacher, or Hofmann. They try to discredit the drawing of Christian doctrines from the passages of Scripture which deal with these doctrines by the assertion that through this outdated method Scripture is transformed into a "collection of proofs of doctrine."

How Luther exposes this deception, which takes place under the appearance of the

1186) Syst. I, 349.

1187) [St. L. XI, 2335 f.](#)

exposition of the Scriptures, completely eliminates the Scriptures. When the enthusiasts declared that they would like to argue with Luther from the Scriptures, but suggested that Luther should set aside the Scriptural words dealing with the Lord's Supper and argue with them from John 6 about the Lord's Supper, Luther gave this answer: "It is the arrogance and idle malice of the wicked devil who mocks us by such enthusiasts in this great matter that he pretends to want to be instructed by the Scriptures so far as to put the Scriptures out of the way beforehand or to make his conceit out of them. It is as if I were to strip a man of his weapons with cunning words, and in exchange give him painted weapons made of paper like his own, and then offer him defiance, so that he would strike me with them or defend himself against me. O that would be a bold hero to spit at!" The proposal of the enthusiasts to interpret the words of the Last Supper according to John 6 was more or less clearly based on the idea that the meaning of all scriptural passages, even the clear ones, could only be determined by comparison with other scriptural passages. Luther gives the following verdict on this exegetical method:¹¹⁸⁸⁾ "In this way it will happen that no passage in Scripture is certain and clear, and such a mutual comparison of one passage with another will take place into infinity. ... To want to interpret clear and certain passages by comparing them with others is to mock the truth unworthily (*nequiter veritatem illudere*) and to bring darkness into the light (*nebulas in lucem vehere*). Likewise, if one wanted to interpret all passages by comparison with others, this would mean to throw the whole Scripture together in an infinite and uncertain, desolate heap (*totam Scripturam in infinitum et incertum chaos confundere*). Is this not clear enough? Without doubt you recognize very well that this is how it is." Thus resolutely does Luther hold to the divine institution of Holy Scriptures, according to which the whole Christian doctrine is revealed in such passages of Scripture as do not require "exposition" (in the sense of removing obscurities). Whoever does not accept this truth, but wants to establish the meaning of the clear passages dealing with the individual doctrines

1188) In a Latin letter to Carlstadt, which de Wette, *Luthers Briefe* etc., III, 231-240, and the [St. Louis edition, XX, 325 ff](#), in German translation (by Dr. Hoppe).

by means of other passages, enters the path of endless comparison, thereby making the whole Scripture uncertain and dark and transforming it into an inextricable chaos. Luther leaves the rule standing: "One passage must be explained by another." But he adds: "namely, a doubtful and dark passage (*locus ambiguus et obscurus*) must be interpreted by a clear and certain one". Otherwise we have to do with the nonsensical exegetical method, according to which the light is to be illuminated by the darkness, the light is to be explained by the dark — an exegetical method, of course, which has been carefully cultivated by the false teachers of all times. After Luther said that nothing else stands in the dark passages of Scripture "than what is elsewhere in the clear passages," he continues: "And there come heretics to take the dark passages according to their own understanding, and thus fight against the clear passages and the foundation of faith."¹¹⁸⁹⁾

All of Luther's sharp judgments contained in the foregoing apply even more strongly to modern theologians who want to interpret the whole of Scripture, and especially all clear passages of Scripture, according to the so-called "whole of Scripture. If anything is pure "human conceit," the very opposite of "Scripture," then it is this "whole of Scripture" that was brought onto the path by Schleiermacher and, especially through Hofmann's influence, also penetrated into the modern theology that calls itself Lutheran. This "whole of Scripture" is located entirely outside of Scripture. It is a product of the delusion that the Christian doctrine must be a whole or a system in the sense of human reason or human understanding, according to which, as a standard, the individual doctrines of Scripture are to be understood and cut to size. That with this exegetical method the whole of Christian truth is mocked and the whole of Scripture is turned into a desolate heap of rubble, we have before our eyes. That Schleiermacher threw the whole Christian doctrine overboard by means of the "whole of Scripture" is also admitted by modern theologians. But also in Hofmann's case the result is that he denies such fundamental doctrines as the inspiration of Scripture, the *satisfactio vicaria*, original sin, etc., and thus consequently the whole Christian doctrine, even if he

1189) [St. L.V., 335](#).

did not quite draw this consequence for himself. In short, by the exposition of Scripture according to the "whole of Scripture," Scripture is not its "own light," but the whole of Scripture, which Schleiermacher, Hofmann, etc..

Interpretation of Scripture in its double function, as [enarratio](#) of the content of Scripture and as removal of obscurities by means of the clear passages, is a very serious and sacred business. Scripture is the Word of God, to add to it and to detract from it is strictly forbidden to anyone.¹¹⁹⁰⁾ Whoever wants to bring more light into dark passages than the Scriptures themselves offer in their clear passages, adds to the Word of God. And whoever makes clear passages unclear by drawing in dark passages, is dismissing the Word of God. Especially also to the exegete is the word:¹¹⁹¹⁾ εἴ τις λαλεῖ, ὡς λόγια θεοῦ. What he cannot speak as the Word of God, let him leave unspeakable. Where he is not sure that he is speaking God's Word, he should say so and — according to Luther's counsel — leave the passage uninterpreted. If the exegete wants to stay on the right track and leave the source of Christian doctrine unclouded, he must always remain mindful of the divine truth¹¹⁹²⁾ that "Scripture is its own light", *Scriptura sua radiat luce*. He should not allow himself any exposition that is based on something outside of Scripture. This is true both with respect to the use of language and with respect to the historical circumstances of the text. As interesting and important as it is in the apologetic field to compare, for example, the New Testament Greek with the prehistoric Greek from Homer on and with the contemporaneous Greek in Philo and Josephus and on monuments, etc., it is ultimately and solely the use of language present in the New Testament itself that decides. We would violate the fundamental theorem: *Scripturam ex Scriptura explicandam esse*, and introduce an uncertainty into the conception of the meaning of Scripture, if we wanted to ascribe a meaning to a word and a manner of speaking, which this word and this manner of speaking does not also have in Scripture itself. This is also generally acknowledged and is also very emphatically inculcated by our old theologians. They emphasize: Like Homer, Plato,

1190) Deut. 4:2. 1191) 1 Petr. 4:11.

1192) Ps. 119:105; 2 Peter 1:19.

Aristotle, Athanasius, Jerome, etc., are to be understood according to the use of language peculiar to every writer, if we do not want to "insert" but "exposition," then this is also to be thoroughly noted with regard to Holy Scriptures. Compare, for example, in Quenstedt the passage: *An Sacra Scriptura seipsam interpretetur*. ["Holy Scripture to be interpreted by itself"]¹¹⁹³⁾ The same applies with respect to the historical data and circumstances. All historical indications and circumstances of time, which are necessary for the understanding of the Scriptures until the Last Day, are contained in the Scriptures themselves. We must keep ourselves free from the abuses that have attached themselves in our time to the study of Old and New Testament contemporary history. Not long ago, at a conference of sectarian preachers meeting in St. Louis, a speaker occasionally claimed that a sure understanding of Scripture was especially impossible for the laity, because this understanding depended on the "historical background," with which, however, only specialists (experts) could be acquainted. There we would be back to the Roman fundamental article of the obscurity of Scripture, and instead of the Pope, the experts in Old and New Testament contemporary history would "sit over the eggs and become our idol," as Luther puts it. Against this it is to be noted: However, acquaintance with contemporary history, insofar as it is based on profane writings, historical monuments, etc., is not only interesting but also important in several respects. It gains importance for our apologetic activity, from which we cannot completely escape. We are able to point out that the historical etc. data of the Holy Scriptures do not belong to the area of fables, but are confirmed to a large part by profane history. On the other hand, it is to be noted that the sure understanding of the Scriptures does not depend in any way on the acquaintance with the profane-historical background, because the whole "historical background", which is necessary for the sure grasp of the meaning of the Scriptures, is given in the Scriptures themselves. We would also already go astray in the exegesis of Scripture if we wanted to supplement the historical background, which is given in Scripture itself, by profane historical things and would allow this supplement to have a somehow decisive influence

1193) *Systema I*, 199 sqq. Calov, *Syst. Locorum Theol. I*, 469 sqq.

on the exegesis. This would also be a violation of the truth that Scripture shines in its own light. We would also thereby introduce a moment of uncertainty into the interpretation of Scripture. For who vouches for us the correctness of the profane historical background, if it goes beyond the Scriptures? The Scripture is the only book in the world in which no historical errors occur. Admittedly, the grossest abuse of the history of the times is when we want to correct or put into doubt the historical data of the Scriptures on the basis of the "history of the times". We already pointed out in another context that modern theologians, who do not consider the Scriptures to be the Word of God, want to correct or doubt the historical data of the Scriptures based on the history of the times, which Josephus presents.

We conclude this section "Scripture and Exegesis" with Luther's recurring admonition never to substitute a human interpretation for the "text," that is, for the very words of Scripture. He says:¹¹⁹⁴⁾ "With the text and from the foundation of the Holy Scriptures I have outwitted and outlived all my adversaries. ... For he who is well founded and practiced in the text becomes a good and excellent theologian, since a passage and text from the Bible is more valid than many scribes and glosses, which are not strong and round, and yet they do not help in the controversy." Further:¹¹⁹⁵⁾ "Where the fathers teach something, they do not trust their doctrine, worry that it is too dark and uncertain, and run to the Scriptures, take a clear passage from it, so that they may enlighten their thing. ... How should they have overcome the heretics, where they would have argued with their own glosses? They would have been thought fools and nonsensical; but since they led such clear passages, which need no glosses, that all reason was caught with them, the evil spirit itself with all heresies had to give way to them." Hence Luther's further admonition:¹¹⁹⁶⁾ "It should be the first care of a theologian that he be well versed in the text, a *bonus textualis*, as it is called." He complains about the many "commentaries and books" by which "the dear Bible is buried and covered up, that one pays no attention to the text at all." From his own experience, he

 1194) St. [L. XX, 6.7.](#) 1195) [St. L. XVIII. 1293.](#) 1196) [St. L. V. 456.](#)

says:¹¹⁹⁷⁾ "When I was young, I became accustomed to the Bible, read it often and became familiar with the text, so that I knew where every passage stood and could be found when it was addressed; thus I became a good textualist. Only then did I read the scribes. But in the end I had to put them all out of my sight and put them away, because I could not be satisfied with them in my conscience, and so I had to keep the Bible again; for it is much better to see with one's own eyes than with foreign ones. Thus Luther stood in his conscience with the exclusion of human exposition on the mere text of Scripture. The talk, much heard in our day, that all church fellowships stand on Scripture and differ only in the exposition of Scripture, is based on an error. The Roman Church does not stand on Scripture, but on the papal exposition of Scripture. The Reformed fellowships, insofar as they differ from the Lutheran Church, do not stand on Scripture, but on Zwingli's, Calvin's, etc. Scripture's exposition. The Lutheran Church, on the other hand, does not stand on an exposition of Scripture, but on Scripture itself. That this is not a mere assertion, it can demonstrate by way of induction against all the world's contradiction.

The doctrines of God. ^

(*De Deo.*)

All human knowledge of God is based on God's self-revelation. A so-called absolute knowledge of God independent of God's self-revelation is impossible because God dwells in a light inaccessible to men, 1 Tim. 6:16: φώς οἰκῶν ἀπρόσιτον. God's self-revelation is present in two ways: a. in God's creation or the realm of nature, b. in God's Word or Holy Scriptures. The Holy Scriptures are for our time the only source and norm of Christian doctrines. According to this, we distinguish a natural and a Christian knowledge of God.

1197) Erl. Aug. 57, 88 f. [St. L. XXII, 54 f.](#)

1. The natural knowledge of God. ^

(*Notitia Dei naturalis.*)

As for the content of the natural knowledge of God, it includes not only the knowledge that there is a personal, eternal, and omnipotent God who created, sustains, and governs the world, but also the knowledge that God is a holy and righteous God who demands and rewards good and forbids and punishes evil. Mediated or wrought is this knowledge:

a. Through the divine works of creation (ποιήματα τον Θεον, *creaturae Dei*), which testify to themselves as God's works (as God-made). Rom. 1:20: τὰ ἀόρατα τον Θεον ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθοράται, ἢ τε ἀίδιος αντον δύναμις καὶ Θεϊότης. Here it is stated: although God is invisible, yet He can be seen by men. Men need only direct their attention to the works of creation (τα ποιήματα τον Θεον) to see God's invisible being (τα ἀόρατα τον Θεον), specifically to behold clearly (καθοράται) His eternal power and divinity (ἢ τε ἀίδιος αντον δύναμις καὶ Θεϊότης).¹¹⁹⁸ It is surprising that heathens, when they used their reason (νους), spoke quite similarly. For example, Aristotle says of God:¹¹²⁹ Ἰάσγή θνητὴ φύσει γενόμενος ἀθεώρατος ἀπ' αντών των ἐργων θεωρεῖται. [“Though God is invisible to every mortal creature, He is visible from His very works.”] Likewise Cicero:¹²⁰⁰ *Deum non vides, tamen Deum agnoscis ex operibus eius.* [“Ydo not see God, and yet you learn to know God from His works.”] (Cosmological proof of the existence of God.)

b. By God's continued activity both in the kingdom of nature and in the history of nations. Regarding God's activity in the kingdom of nature it says in Acts 14:15-17 that although God allowed the heathen to go their own way, he nevertheless did not lack self-witness even to the heathen (ονκ ἀμάρτυρον αντόν ἀφήκεν). The how of the divine self-affirmation

1198) Concerning ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου: The ἀπὸ is used in the New Testament both from the ground of knowledge, as Matt. 7:16: "By their fruits (ἀπὸ των καρπών αν των) you shall know them", and as a time determination: since, from the beginning, Matt. 19:4: ο ποιήσας ἀπ' αρχής. Luther used ἀπὸ from the ground of knowledge: "at the creation of the world." We stick with this version because it not only fits well in the context, but also seems to belong to the general Greek usage. Cf. Aristotle in the following quotation. Newer exegetes find divided opinion.

1199) *De Mundo*, cap. VI.

1200) *Tuscul. Disputt.* I, 28.

the apostle indicates with the words: ἀγαθοποιῶν, οὐρανόθεν ἡμῖν ὑετοὺς διδοὺς καὶ καιροὺς καρποφόρους κτλ. That there is also a natural knowledge of God from the history of the nations is taught by the apostle Acts 17:26-28. God not only made that of one blood of all men generations dwell on the whole face of the earth, but also chronologically and geographically fixed their boundaries (δρίσας προστεταγμένους καιροὺς καὶ τάς οροθεσίας τῆς κατοικίας αὐτῶν), and that for the purpose that they should seek the Lord (ζηρεῖν), whether yet they feel Him and find Him (ψηλαφεῖν ... εὑρίσκειν) would like. And this general argument Paul extends to the individual: "And indeed he is not far from any one of us; for in him we have life, motion, and existence." "The history of the world is the judgment of the world." (Historical-theological proof.)


c. Through the law of God written in the heart of all men. Through this, God does not merely approach man from without, as in the works of creation and in history, but from within man himself, and testifies to him as the holy and righteous God, who demands and rewards the good and forbids and reproves the evil. Rom. 1:32 is said of the heathen: το δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιγνόντες and Rom. 2:14-15 likewise of the heathen, who did not have the law of God written on tablets as the Jews had: ἐνδείκνυνται το ἐργον τον νόμον [namely, of the law of God] γραπτόν εν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν, συμπαρτηρυνσης αὐτῶν τῆς συνειδήσεως καὶ μεταξύ ἀλλήλων τῶν λογισμῶν κατηγορονητων ἢ καὶ απολογούμενων. According to this, the human conscience is at the same time God's court in man, and it is also recognized as God's court. Hence come the attempts of the heathen, by worship, sacrifice, asceticism, etc. This is the reason for the attempts of the pagans to reconcile God through worship, sacrifice, asceticism, etc., and thus to transform their evil conscience into a good conscience. (Moral proof of the existence of God or the proof from the fact of the moral law, "from practical reason"). ¹²⁰¹⁾

Of atheism it is to be judged that in all its forms (as openly named atheism, as pantheism, as polytheism, as agnosticism) it is not based on "enlightenment" or "science," but has its ground in the repression or

 1201) Other forms of proof for the existence of God in [Baier-Walther I, 26 sqq.](#)

suppression of the natural knowledge of God by immorality. Its representatives form the class τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων (Rom. 1:18). As for the assertion that there is no evidence of God's existence, it is to be limited to this: for the man who renounces the use of his reason (νοῦς). The Scripture says that God's invisible being and His eternal power and Godhead are seen τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοοῦμενα., perceived by creatures.

The natural knowledge of God is, as far as it goes, a true, ἀλήθεια (Rom. 1:18). The Apology very correctly states¹²⁰²): *Ius naturale vere est divinum, quia est ordinatio divinitus impressa*. [“Natural law is truly divine, because it is a divinely imprinted ordinance.”] This leads to the question whether the natural knowledge of God can be suppressed to such an extent that it is rendered ineffective or even completely eradicated by the whole life. We will have to agree with Hollaz when he denies this:¹²⁰³) *Possunt dari athei speculative tales, non per naturam, sed per iustam Dei desertionem et diaboli excaecationem; non per totalem eradicationem luminis naturae quoad habitum, sed per suffocationem quoad actum et exercitium; non per totum vitae spatium et permanenter, sed tantum per quendam paroxysmum transeuntem ad aliquod tempus. Neque enim lex naturae patitur, ut rata et firma sententia alicui inhaereat, non esse Deum. Quanquam enim mens hominis impii lethargo quasi sopiatur, ut de Deo non cogitet, nullus tamen potest dari, in quo tandem conscientia se non vindicet et vel in ipsa morte neglecti Dei ipsum accuset.* [Google] This is followed by the much discussed question whether the natural knowledge of God is innate (*innata*) or acquired (*acquisita*). It is both. That it is innate is evident from the words ἐνδείκνυνται τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν. [Rom. 2:15] But the innate is capable of exercise and increase through the contemplation of creatures, etc., and thus it comes to the *notitia Dei acquisita*. Quenstedt says:¹²⁰⁴) *Notitia Dei naturalis est duplex, una ἐμφυῖτος sive naturae et mentibus hominum in ipso ortu suo impressa, insita et implantata, qua homo ex principiis secum natis, tanquam imaginis divinae rudibus quibusdam et reliquiis sine discursu et mentis operatione Deum cognoscit; altera ἐπίκτητος dicitur*

1202) M. 238, 12. [Trigl. 366, 12 

1203) *Examen I, cap. I, qu.*

6.

1204) *Systema I, 366.*

seu acquisita, quia ex insitis naturae principiis per ratiocinationem et accuratam creaturarum contemplationem acquiritur sive ex operibus Dei in creatione et vestigiis illis divinitatis, quae sparsa sunt in tota rerum natura, colligitur. [Google]

As for the practical result of the natural knowledge of God, it does not lead beyond an evil conscience, because by virtue of it men recognize God's existence and know about God's law, but do not keep God's law and thus remain under the curse of the law and in an evil conscience.¹²⁰⁵⁾ Therefore, the state of the natural man before faith in the gospel is a state *extra ecclesiam Dei* and a state of hopelessness. Eph. 2:12: ξένοι των διαθηκών τῆς επαγγελίας, ἐλπίδα μή εχοντες και ἄθειοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ. This does not contradict the γνόντες τον θεόν (Rom. 1:21), because here, in the Ephesians passage, the knowledge of the gracious God is addressed. Thus, with regard to the value of the natural knowledge of God, the result remains: *Cognitio Dei naturalis pro praesenti statu hominum ad salutem consequendam minime sufficit*. [“For the present state of men, the natural knowledge of God is by no means sufficient to attain salvation.”] But therefore it is not worthless. It is the basis of civil righteousness (*iustitia civilis*), without which human coexistence is impossible. The Apology therefore clearly puts the value of *iustitia rationis* in the light by calling on Aristotle.¹²⁰⁶⁾ Therefore, furthermore, reasonable men, also heathens, have considered whether declared atheists should be admitted to citizenship. — The natural knowledge of God also has value for the church. First, because the civil or state order, which natural religion serves, is the external home of the church.¹²⁰⁷⁾ Secondly, because the law of God written in the heart of man is the starting point for the sermon of the law on the part of the church. Luther:¹²⁰⁸⁾ “If the natural law were not written and given by God into the heart, one would have to preach for a long time before the consciences would be struck; one would have to preach to a donkey, horse's ox, bark a hundred thousand years before they would accept the law, even though they have ears, eyes and heart like a man; they can also hear it, but it does not fall into the heart. Why? What is the fault? The soul is not formed according to it

1205) Rom. 1:19-21; 1:32; 2:14. 15. 1206) M., p. 91, 22-24. [Trigl. 127, 22-24 ☺]

1207) 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2. 1208) St. L. III, 1053.

and created that such things should fall into it. But a man, when the law is held up to him, soon says, "Yes, it is so, I cannot deny it. He could not be persuaded so soon, unless it were written in his heart beforehand. Because it was written in his heart before, even though it was dark and completely faded, it is awakened again with the word that the heart must confess that it is so, as the commandments say, that one honors, loves, and serves one God, because he alone is good and does good, and not only to the pious, but also to the wicked." Lutheran theologians speak very carefully of the natural knowledge of God, on the one hand by detailing its great value, ¹²⁰⁹⁾

1209) Chemnitz, Loci, II, 103 sq.; ed. Yiteb. 1623: Adhibendum est iudicium in usu disputationis de lege naturae. In locis ostenditur vera ratio, quomodo recte et utiliter quaeri et considerari possit consensus legum naturae cum decalogo. Et traduntur hae causae: 1. Quia Paulus ex professo illam disputationem tractat Rom. 1 et 2 et tribuit legi naturae honestissimas appellationes. Vocat enim Rom. 1:18 veritatem Dei, v. 19 patefactionem Dei, v. 32 ius Dei, Rom. 2:15 opus legis, scriptum in cordibus in ipsa creatione. Et quidem appellatio legis naturae inde sumpta est; inquit enim v. 14: "Gentes natura, quae legis sunt, faciunt." Et grati agnoscamus illud beneficium, quod non voluerit lucem legis totam extinctam per lapsum; sed voluit reliquias quasdam superesse, ut possit esse consociatio politica inter homines, in qua Deus per vocem evangelii colligat ecclesiam. Et reliquias illas esse magnificiendas, monent Pauli vocabula. — Utilis est haec collatio, ut discamus amare, venerari et magnificare sententias morales congruentes legi naturae, ubicunque extent et legantur apud poetas, historicos, philosophos, legumlatores etc.. [Google] Quia sunt ius divinum et veritas Dei divinitus patefacta. Ita Paulus non est veritus in gravissima causa ex Menandro citare sententiam 1 Cor, 15:33: "Corrumpunt bonos mores colloquia prava." — 3. prodest etiam ad hoc, ut testimonium conscientiae etiam in non renatis magmficiamus; ne scilicet cogitationes accusantes (quas Paulus ita vocat Rom. 2:15), quando sentiuntur, retundantur hac imaginatione, quasi sit inanis quaedam phantasia, quam muliebre sit curare, sed statuamus, esse vere iudicium Dei, arguentis peccata. — 4. Ut ex illa collatione observetur, in quibus partibus obscurata sit naturalis notitia legis, ubi iudicium depravatum, et quae sint illa, sive peccata sive bona opera, quae ignota rationi in decalogo ostendantur. Hoc modo collatio legum naturae cum decalogo recte et utiliter potest adhiberi et quidem aliquo modo ita illustrabitur vera sententia. ... Secunda tabula legis naturae a philosophis negative ponitur: Quod tibi non vis fieri, alteri ne feceris. Christus vero affirmative recitat Matt. 7:12: "Quidquid vultis, ut faciant homines vobis, et vos facite illis"; et diserte ostendit consensum huius sententiae cum decalogo. Inquit enim: "Haec est lex et prophetae", scilicet in secunda tabula. [Google]

and on the other hand its deficit and complete insufficiency for attaining salvation.¹²¹⁰⁾ They resolutely oppose all deniers of the natural knowledge of God as well as the great multitude of those who transfer man to heaven on the basis of his natural knowledge of God. They spare neither friend nor foe.¹²¹¹⁾

 1210) Chemnitz, *I. c. I, 20 sq.: Quae, qualis et quanta est illa notitia naturalis et quousque progreditur?*- Vere loquendo: aut nulla, aut imperfecta, aut languida est. Nulla, quia de gratuita promissione remissionis peccatorum nihil novit tota philosophia; illam enim Filius Dei e sinu aeterni Patris prolatam revelavit ecclesiae. Ioh. 1:18, Matt. 11:27 et 1 Cor. 1:21 et 2:7. — Imperfecta, quia gentes aliquam tantum particulam legis noverunt. De interioribus vero cultibus primae tabulae nihil certi vel novit vel statuit ratio; tantum de quibusdam externis et civilibus negotiis docent quidam gentium philosophi. Interea miscent multa άτοπα καὶ παράδοξα, de quibus nec inter ipsos satis convenit. — Languida, quia, etiamsi impressum est humanis. mentibus, esse Deum et praecipere obedientiam iuxta discrimen honestorum et turpium, tamen assensio non tantum languida est, sed horrendis dubitationibus saepe excutitur. Sicut extat pulcherrima descriptio in Tuscul., ubi Cicero, disputans de immortalitate animae, dieit ad Antonium: "Evolue diligenter librum Platonis, qui est de anima; amplius quid desideres, nihil erit. Feci, me Hercule, inquit Antonius, et quidem saepius; sed neseio, quomodo dum lego, assentior, cum posui librum et mecum ipse de immortalitate animarum cogitare coepi, omnis illa assensio elabitur." [Google]

1211) Thus Gerhard, *Loci, L. De Natura Dei*, § 63, lists *bie errantes in defectu* unb § 81 *bie errantes in excessu*. Among the *errantes in defectu*, who ascribe too little to the natural knowledge of God, he names the Socinians., quorum origo erroris videtur ex eo pendere, quod negant primum hominem ad immortalitatem esse conditum et iustitiam quandam originalem habuisse, cuius divinae imaginis reliquiae sunt notitiae naturales; furthermore Flacius, when the latter expresses himself thus in his *in fine Clavis sub voee Legis: Quod aliqua vera principia aut notitiae unius Dei eiusque gubernationis sunt adhuc in homine, concedi non debet*, in general all those who *temere et indistincte pronuntiant, falsum esse ac dici, si gentiles affirmant, Deum esse aeternum, omnipotentem etc., cum apostolus diserte vocet Dei veritatem, Rom. 1:18*, More detailed is necessary Gerhard's enumeration of those who *peccant in excessu*, that is, who ascribe too much to the natural knowledge of God: In excessu peccant, qui eam ad salutem consequendam sufficientem esse statuunt, quod faciunt a. quidam ex patribus et scholasticis, qui homines ante promulgatam a Mose legem notitia naturali salvari potuisse et salvatos fuisse asserunt. [Google] (Ut enim recte monet Augustinus, ep. 49: "Quadam indole animi delectant ethnicorum virtutes, ut non libenter illas damnemus.") Clement Alexandr., lib. I. Strom.: "Per se aliquando Graecos iustificabat philosophia; multae enim sunt viae ad

2. The Christian knowledge of God. [^]

The Christian knowledge of God, which has God's Word, the Holy Scriptures, as its source of knowledge, is Trinitarian, that is, the Christian recognizes that the one true God is Father and Son and Holy Spirit. Luther is right when he says in a theological thesis:¹²¹²⁾ *Scriptura Sancta docet, esse Deum simplicissime unum et tres, ut vocant, personas verissime distinctas.*

salutem." Iustin., Apol. 2: "*Qui μετὰ λόγον vixerunt, Christiani sunt, etiamsi non novisse Deum existimati sunt, quales apud Graecos fuerunt Socrates, Aristides.*" Similia occurrunt apud Irenaeum, Tertullianum, Epiphanium, Hieronymum, Chrysostomum etc. Sed Augustinus, Pelagiano certamine excitatus, ea, quae incommode a veteribus dicta fuerant, corripit. Eandem fuisse scholasticorum sententiam, docet eamque refutat Acosta ... b. Quidam ex pontificiis. Andradius in defens. Conc. Trid., 1st III, p. 292: "Vera fides et vera Dei cognitio ad iustitiam et salutem aeternam non ex sacris tantum literis divinisque oraculis, sed ex rebus etiam iis, quae sensibus subiiciuntur, haberi potest." ... Erasmus in praef. super Tuse. qq. Cic.: "Me non admodum adversum habituri sunt ferendis calculis, qui sperant, illum apud superos quietam vitam agere." Idem in Coli. Relig.: "Cum talia lego, vix mihi tempero, quin dieam: Sancte Socrates, ora pro nobis." Et postea: "At ipse mihi saepenumero non tempero, quin bene ominer sanctae animae Maronis et Flacci." ...^[Google] 3. Quidam ex Calvinianis, Zwinglius in Expos. Fidei ad regem exarata Christian: "Numam, Aristidem, Socratem etc. inter beatos coelites" collocat et, Deum "aliquid fidei sua manu in cor Senecae scripsisse", asserit, ex quo iocus Viti Winshemii ortus: "Ca-vete vobis, auditores, a caelo Zwinglianorum; ego non libenter in illo caelo viverem; metuerem enim mihi a clava Herculis." Vide etiam Zwinglii Elench. contra Anabapt. tom. I, opp. fol. 35. Idem tom. I, ep. 1, f. 382: "Ethnieus, si piam mentem domi foveat, Christianus est, etiamsi Christ ignoret." De Prov., tom. I, f. 358, de Seneca scribit, quod "religiose de rerum creatione et conservatione locutus fuerit, quod divinum animum habuerit." Zwinglii patrocinium suscepit Gualtherus, ipsius gener, in Apologia, edita anno 1545, p. 52, ubi quibusdam rationibus Zwinglii opinionem suffulcire conatur. ... ^[Google] 4. Photimani, licet notitiam Dei naturalem plane negent, salvis tamen suis hypothesibus aliter statuere non possunt, quam, cognitionem Dei ad salutem sufficientem gentiles etiam extra ecclesiam habere potuisse. ... Catech. Racov., p. 25. 26, quaestioni: "Quaenam sunt, quae ad essentiam Dei pertinent, prorsus ad salutem necessaria?" respondet hoc modo: "Sunt ea, quod Deus sit, quod sit tantum unus, quod aeternus, quod perfecte iustus, perfecte sapiens et perfecte potens." Ostorodus, Inst., c. 3, p. 28: "Praeter haec nihil aliud scimus cognitu necessarium, quantum ad essentiam Dei attinet." Atqui ista omnia ex naturali notitia hauriri possunt, ergo iuxta Photinianorum hypothesin gentiles eorum, quae ad salutem sunt necessaria, cognitionem ex natura petere potuerunt." ^[Google]

1212) Opp. v. a. IV, 473. St. L. X, 177.

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments teach first that God is only one (monotheism), Deut. 6: 4: יְהוָה יְהוָה אֶחָד יְהוָה אֶחָד [HEBREW]. Likewise in the New Testament, 1 Cor. 8:4: Οὐδεὶς θεὸς εἷς ἐστὶν εἷς. We can call the whole of Scripture a great protest against polytheism. The gods of the heathen are (Jer. 2, 11), אֱלֹהִים לֹא [HEBREW], non-gods (Jer. 2:11), לֵינִי לֹא [HEBREW], void, "nothing", without real existence, 3 Mos, 19:4; 26:1, Likewise in the New Testament, 1 Cor. 8:4: Οὐδεν ἐῖδωλον ἐν τῇ κόσμῳ; Acts 14:15: μάταιοι θεοί. They can neither harm nor benefit; for יְהוָה בָּרַךְ לֹא [HEBREW] and בָּרַךְ הָאֱלֹהִים [HEBREW] (Jer. 10:6. 14. 16). According to Scripture, therefore, even the worship of men is to be monotheistic only, to go only to the one God, Ex. 20:3: "Thou shalt have no other gods beside me." Likewise Mark. 12:29-30 after the words: "Our God is one God" (εἷς): "You shall love God, your Lord, with all your heart, with all your soul" etc. If there were other gods besides the one, this would require on the part of man a division of the heart according to the number of gods. Polytheism with its worship of several gods does not fall under the concept of *cultus divinus*. What the heathen sacrifice to their gods, they do not sacrifice to God, but to the devils, 1 Cor. 10:20. If the heathen really want to worship God, they must leave their gods and convert to the one true God, as Paul and Barnabas proclaim to the Lystrans: ¹²¹³⁾ Εὐαγγελιζόμενοι υμᾶς ἀπὸ τούτων των ματαίων επιστρέφειν ἰπὶ τον θεόν τον ζώντα, δς ἐποίησεν τον ουρανόν κτλ. So mightily does Scripture teach monotheism to polytheism. But just as decisively, the doctrine also teaches that the one God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that is, three persons in the one God, for Father, Son, and Spirit are personal names. Christian baptism is εἰς τό ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς και τοῦ υιοῦ και τον ἅγιον πνεύματος (Matt. 28:19), and the Christian benediction is (2 Cor. 13:13 [14?]): Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν. "*Abi ad Iordanem et disce Trinitatem*." ["Go to Jordan and learn about the Trinity "] (Matt. 3:16-17.)¹²¹⁴⁾ That the three persons in the

1213) Acts 14:15.

1214) Luther on this in the sermon on the Feast of the Epiphany, St. L. XII, 1131 ff: "So this feast may well be called the Day of the Apparition or Revelation of the Holy Trinity."

one God are also already clearly revealed in the Old Testament — even if not as clearly as in the New Testament — will be proven in the following under a special section.

This Christian knowledge of God is not mediated and effected by God's revelation in the realm of nature, in the history of mankind and in the conscience, but only by God's revelation in the Word, that is, in the way that God speaks to us men and with us men in the Scriptures, which are his Word, and thus opens up his inner being and his heart to us. Through the natural knowledge of God, says Luther,¹²¹⁵⁾ we recognize God as it were from without, namely by His works, just as we infer from the condition of a house the condition of the master builder. Through the Christian knowledge of God, on the other hand, which is based on God's speech or Word of God, we recognize God "from within," "in His inner being" and "what He has in mind for men, that they may be saved," in the way that one man opens up his inner being to another through speech and Word and reveals his heart and thoughts. This great difference between the natural and Christian knowledge of God would, of course, disappear if we were to believe the modern theologians in their assertion that the Holy Scriptures are not God's own Word, but only the more or less God-influenced human view that the Jewish and the first Christian churches had of God and divine things. But this assertion is, thank God, a completely erroneous one. We saw that Christ and His holy apostles "identify" Scripture and the Word of God absolutely. By abiding by the Scriptures, we hear what God says of Himself, and we realize both that the one true God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and what the nature of the thoughts are that God has had from eternity against us sinful men.

And this brings us to the practical result of the Christian knowledge of God. It does not leave us stuck in an evil conscience, as the natural knowledge of God does, but gives us a good conscience. It is our salvation. The Scriptures do not leave it at the communication that in the one eternal God there are three equally eternal persons of one and the same divine being, but they bind the further communication with it,

1215) [St. L. XII, 629 ff.](#)

that God therefore loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son to it as deliverer from the guilt of sin and death, that the eternal Son became man in time and by his substitutionary satisfaction reconciled the world of men to God, and that the Holy Spirit, through the effect of faith in the reconciliation that has taken place, appropriates the salvation to men. Whoever speaks in the scriptural sense, "I believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," speaks at the same time, "I believe in the God who is gracious to me a sinner."

At all times, and especially in our own time, the Christian Church has struggled over the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, a struggle that has been long and fraught with many offences. But the Christian Church knew that it was fighting for its Christian knowledge of God and thus for its salvation. The church of the Reformation also confesses the doctrine of the Trinity in the first article of the Augustana and at the same time renounces all deniers of it. The Apology judges,¹²¹⁶⁾ that all deniers of the Trinity who have stood up within external Christianity stand outside the Christian Church. If we look at Luther, we are immediately confronted with the fact that with the same seriousness with which he put the Christian doctrine of justification back on the lampstand, he also taught the doctrine of the Holy Trinity incessantly and with the greatest determination. And not only as a professor of theology in sharply written theological theses,¹²¹⁷⁾ but in all his writings¹²¹⁸⁾ and especially in his sermons for the Christian people. Read, for example, two sermons preached on Trinity Sunday,¹²¹⁹⁾ in which both the difference between the natural and the Christian knowledge of God and the inseparable connection between the doctrines of the Trinity and justification are set forth in a generally understandable

1216) M. 77, 2. [[Trigl.](#), p. 103, 1-2 

1217) Cf. Opp. v. a. IV, 470 sqq.: *Disputatio theologica de mysterio sanctae Trinitatis* of 1544 and *Disputationes duae de unitate essentiae divinae et de distinctione personarum in divinitate* of 1545. The German translation: Walch X, 217 ff.; [St. L. X, 177 ff.](#)

1218) Especially in detail in the exposition of the last words of David, [St. L. III, 1884 ff.](#)

1219) [St. L. XII, 628 ff.](#); [XIII, 664 ff.](#) In the Erl. Ausg. both sermons are found 9:1-37.

manner. Also every theologian will read these sermons with benefit. We put here a part from the first sermon. Luther says: "This is the revelation and knowledge of God to Christians, that they not only know that there is one true God apart from and above all creatures, and that he can be no more than the same one God, but also what the same one God is in his inward unfathomable nature. For human reason and wisdom can nevertheless come so far from itself that it concludes (however weakly) that there must be a one, eternal, divine being who creates, sustains and governs all things, because it sees such a beautiful, excellent creature, both in heaven and earth, so wonderful, orderly and certain, in its governance, that it must say that it is not possible for it to be made and walk in this way by chance or by itself, but that it must be a Creator and Lord, from whom it all comes and is governed, and must therefore recognize God in the creatures; as St. Paul Rom. 1:20 also says that God's invisible essence, that is, his eternal power and divinity, is seen when it is perceived in the works, namely in the creation of the world. This is a knowledge (*a posteriore*), since one looks at God from the outside by his works and governance, as one looks at a castle or house by heart and thereby feels the master or landlord. But (*a priore*) from within, no human wisdom has ever been able to see what and how God is in himself or in his inner being, nor can anyone know or speak anything about it, for it has been revealed to him through the Holy Spirit. For just as no one knows what is in a man, says St. Paul in 1 Cor. 2:11, except the spirit of the man that is in him, so also what is in God, no one can know except the Spirit of God. From the outside I may well see what you do, but I cannot see what you have in mind and think. And again, you also cannot know what I am thinking unless I make you understand it by word or sign. So much less can we see and know what God is in his own secret essence, until the Holy Spirit, who also searches and sees the depth of the Godhead, says Paul there, reveals this to us; as he does by the sermon of this article, in which he teaches us that in the divine majesty there is no more than one undivided being, and yet

in the same, that there is first of all the person called the Father; and from this the other, which is the Son, born from eternity; and the third, proceeding from these two, which is the Holy Spirit. These three persons do not separate from each other like two or three brethren or sisters, but remain in one eternal, undivided and inseparable being. Such things, I say, are not investigated, climbed, or ascended by human reason, but are revealed from heaven above; therefore only Christians can address both what is the essential Godhead in Himself, and also how He shows Himself from without, in His creatures, and what He has in mind for men, that they may be saved. For they hear all this from the Holy Spirit, who reveals and proclaims it through the Word. But the others, who do not have such revelation and judge according to their own wisdom, as Jews, Turks and heathens, must consider such sermons to be the greatest error and highest heresy, and say that we Christians are mad and foolish that we make three gods, when according to all reason, even according to the Word of God, there cannot be more than one God; for it does not rhyme that there is more than one host in one house, more than one lord and prince in one governance; much less that there is more than one God ruling over heaven and earth; they think that with such wisdom they have put us down mightily, and with our faith have made a mockery of us to all the world; just as if we were so very coarse-minded and great fools that we could not also see such things, who after all, praise God!, have so much common sense, and who argue and prove, as well as they do, if not better and with more reasons than they do, with all their Koran and Talmud, that there is no more than one God... Now we Christians have the Scriptures, of which we are certain that they are the Word of God, which also the Jews themselves have and which came to us from their fathers, from which also and from no other all that is known of God and divine works, even among the Turks and the heathen (if it is not publicly fables and invented) has been taken from the beginning of the world, confirmed and proven with great miraculous works to this day. This article tells us that there is no God or divine being except the one God; but it not only presents God to us from the outside, but also leads us into his inner being and shows that in him there are three persons, but not three gods or

threefold Godhead, but one undivided divine essence." After Luther has given the scriptural proof for the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, he adds with regard to the practical result in comparison with the natural knowledge of God: "What does it help you if you can say nothing more, because God is merciful to the pious and rebukes the wicked? Who makes you sure that you are pious and please God with your papal and Turkish monasticism and holiness? Is it enough for you to say that whoever keeps such an order, God wants to give him heaven? No, dear brethren, it is not necessary to think or say what seems good to you, for I could do that as well as you, just as it happens that everyone thinks up something special, this one a gray, that one a black monk's cap, etc., but to hear and know what God's counsel, will and opinion is. This no man shall tell thee out of his own head, neither shall any book on earth teach thee, except that one word and scripture, given of God himself, which declare unto us that he sent his Son into the world to redeem them from sins and the wrath of God, that whosoever believeth in him should have everlasting life."

3. The struggle of the church for the Christian knowledge of God (Trinity). [^]

We have seen in the previous section that, according to the Christian knowledge of God drawn from the Holy Scriptures, the one true God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and that the salvation of men is based on this knowledge of God. This knowledge of God did not become church faith only through councils, e.g. the Nicene Council or the Council of Constantinople, but the knowledge of the triune God was from the very beginning the faith of the Christians on the basis of the doctrines of the apostles, which were proclaimed orally and set down in writing.¹²²⁰⁾ Luther proves that everything that the first four main councils decided in the matter of the Christian doctrine of the person of Christ and the Holy Trinity is taught "much more abundantly and powerfully" in the Holy Scriptures.¹²²¹⁾ But the fact is, as Luther also constantly points out, that the Christian church has always stood in a hard struggle for the doctrine of the Trinity

1220) Acts 2:42; Eph. 2:20; 2 Thess. 2:15.

1221) Of the Councils and Churches, [St. L. XVI, 2248](#).

both against enemies from outside and against heretics who rose up in its own midst. Augustine notes:¹²²²⁾ "History acquaints us partly with absolute opponents, partly with manifold attempts at explanation and modification." Heathens, Jews and Mohammedans claimed and still claim that the Christian Church teaches three doctrines. The Quran says:¹²²³⁾ "Believe in God and His Messenger [Jesus], but say nothing of the trinity. Avoid it, and it will stand better for you. There is only one God. Far be it from him that he has a son! ... The Creator of heaven and earth, how could he have a son, since he has no wife?" But the Christian church has been especially troubled and disrupted by people who came out of their own midst but behaved very unchurchlike. They dared, even considered it their duty, to present a doctrine of God that was not taken from the Scriptures, but was a product of their own human thoughts. Some thought that in order to hold the unity of God, they had to let go of the three persons in God. Others, however, abandoned the unity of the divine essence and thus the unity of God (the εἷς θεός) because they thought that only in this way could three truly distinct persons be held. That modern theology, which explicitly renounces Scripture as the source and norm of theology, does not leave the doctrine of the Holy Trinity intact goes without saying. We occasionally already come across statements that are on the same line with the Koran's derision of "the Trinity" in the Christian religion. This is the case, for example, when the scriptural doctrine of the three persons in the one God is described as the "establishment of a heavenly family." ¹²²⁴⁾

Now, because the Christian knowledge of God consists in "honoring one God in three persons and three persons in one Godhead, not mingling the persons nor dissecting the divine essence," the Christian church has stood and continues to stand in battle 1. against the deniers of the three persons, 2. against the deniers of the one God or the one divine essence.

1222) *System of Christian Dogmatics*, § 120.

1223) Quoted in Baier-Walther [1](#), [131](#).

1224) Cf. R. Seeberg, *Grundwahrheiten* [5](#), [p. 122](#).

The fight against the deniers of the three persons. [^]

The deniers of the three persons are usually grouped under the overall name Monarchians, Unitarians, Antitrinitarians, and so on. They have appeared in different guises. Some said: there is only one divine person, but this one person has revealed himself successively in three different appearances (*tres modi apparitionis*) as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, or played three roles (πρόσωπα). This is the so-called modalistic monarchianism, as whose representative Sabellius is usually cited (excommunicated in 260). Others said: Christ is not a divine person, but a mere man, in whom, however, the one divine person worked in a unique way, so that he can be called God. The Holy Spirit is also not a divine person, but God's power, which became active in Moses and in the prophets and finally in Christ in a very special way. This is the so-called dynamistic monarchianism, as whose main representative Paul of Samosata is considered (deposed in 272). It was and still is discussed how far the modalistic and the dynamistic monarchians differed from each other and how far they merged.¹²²⁵⁾ In any case, this much stands that both parties denied the three persons in God. Among the deniers of the three persons were the ancient Photinians, the followers of Photinus (Bishop of Sirmium, † c. 366), whose doctrines were renewed in the sixteenth century by the Socinians. In our time, the Unitarians include all Protestant theologians who reject the "two-nature doctrine" or "enhypostasia" and allow the man Christ to form a distinct person. When Seeberg says:¹²²⁶⁾ "This eternal love energy [of God] filled the human soul of Jesus so that it became its content. This is the deity of Christ," he is to be counted among the dynamistic Monarchians, for instance.¹²²⁷⁾ Most English, American and German Unitarians represent the denial of the three persons in dynamistic form.

1225) Cf. Buddeus, *Institt. Theol. Dogmaticae* 1741, § 54, p. 297 sqq. Adolf Harnack, *Dogmengesch.*⁴ 1905, § 25-26, p. 140 ff.

1226) [Basic Truths 5, p. 115](#).

1227) The further explanations under the section "*Unio personalis* and Christological Constellations of the Modern Era," [vol. II, p. 118 ff.](#)

The Scriptural evidence by which the Christian Church has overcome and is still overcoming Unitarianism is clearly available:


a. In the names Father, Son, Holy Spirit. Everyone who hears these names does not think of three manifestations, effects or wills of one person, but of three persons or three "I".

b. In the predicates that are bound in Scripture with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, such as "know," "will," "teach," "rebuke," "speak," etc. Thus it is said of the Father and Son γινώσκειν (Matt. 11:27), of the Son ἐξηγεῖσθαι (John 1:18), θέλειν (John. 17:24), from the Holy Spirit διδάσκειν (Jn. 14:26), ἐλέγχειν (Jn. 16:8), λαλεῖν (Acts 28:25). All these predicates denote personal acts. The axioms apply here: *Actiones semper sunt personarum sive suppositorum intelligentium. Opera sunt personis propria.* ["The actions are always of intelligent persons or suppositions. Works are peculiar to persons."]

c. In the scriptural statements that define the relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit explicitly as ἄλλος και ἄλλος και ἄλλος. Thus in Scripture the Father is expressly called ἄλλος in relation to the Son¹²²⁸⁾ and the Holy Spirit ἄλλος in relation to the Father and the Son.¹²²⁹⁾ Hence the Athanasian Creed:¹²³⁰⁾ *Alia est persona Patris, alia Filii, alia Spiritus Sancti.* ["There is one person of the Father, another of the Son, another of the Holy Spirit."] As for the definition of the word "person," that given in the first article of the Augsburg Confession is fully sufficient: "And by the word *persona* is understood not a matter, not a quality in another, but that itself exists, as then the Fathers used this word in this matter." *Et nomine personae utuntur ea significatione, qua usi sunt in hac causa scriptores ecclesiastici, ut significet non partem aut qualitatem in alio, sed quod proprie subsistit.* [Google] The assertions of newer theologians that it was possible in our time to define the term "person" more profoundly than it was possible for the ancient church are based on imagination, as is to be explained in more detail in the section "The church terminology in the service of the Christian knowledge of God".

1228) Jn. 5:32: ἄλλος ἐστίν ὁ μαρτύρων περὶ ἐμὸν, v. 37: Ὁ πέμψας με πατὴρ, ἐκεῖνος μεμαρτύρηκεν περὶ ἐμὸν.

1229) Jn. 14:16: Ἐρωτήσω τὸν πατέρα καὶ ἄλλον δώσει νῦν.

1230) M., p. 30. [Trigl. 33 

4. The struggle against the deniers of the one God. [^]

The unity of God (*unus Deus*) is denied when the three persons in God are also ascribed to themselves three divine beings (*tres essentiae divinae*) or three divine natures (*tres naturae divinae*). This is done a) on the part of the Tritheists, who assume three divine beings or natures of equal quality in God; b) on the part of the Subordinationists, who teach three divine beings of different quality or dignity. Representatives of the Tritheists are In. Philoponus in the sixth century († after 610) and Roscellinus in the eleventh century.¹²³¹⁾ To the class of the Subordinationists belong the Arians and Semiarians, the Arminians, also modern Lutherans. In a particularly pronounced way Kahnis, of whom the liberal theologians report with satisfaction that he calls Son and Spirit "God in the Word's second and third sense."¹²³²⁾

1231) Documents in Gieseler, Kirchengesch., about Philoponus I, 577 f., about Roscellin II, 2, p. 353 f. about the tritheistic dispute in general RE. ² XVI, 47 ff. Although it is difficult to ascertain all the details in this controversy because of the somewhat confused accounts, this much is certain, that both Philoponus and Roscellin thought that in the Trinity, according to the number of persons, there were also to be assumed three divine natures or three deities. The reason for this departure from the doctrines of Scripture and the Christian Church cannot be misunderstood. There is an attempt to make the scriptural doctrine of the Trinity reasonable in the apologetic interest. Both thought that what applies to three human persons: *Quot personae, tot essentiae*, should also be applied to the three persons in the Godhead: *Quot personae divinae, tot essentiae divinae*. But now it stands, as is well known, that God neither in his action nor in his essence is guided by human thought. The Scripture — and after it the Christian Church — teaches, as we have seen, *tres personas et unam numero essentiam in Divinitate*. Roscellin recanted at the synod of Soissons (1092). Anselm wrote against him his *Liber de Fide Trinitatis et de Incarnatione Verbi contra Blasphemias Ruzelini*, about Roscellin in particular cf. Landerer-Hauck (RE. ² XIII, 52 ff.), where also about the connection between Roscellin's nominalism and his doctrine of three natures in our opinion is correctly judged. Roscellin denied quite correctly the objective existence of *genera* and *species*. His mistake consisted in transferring what is true of three men to the three persons in the one God.

1232) The Arminian dogmatists teach subordinationism very firmly. Episcopius, *Inst. Theol.* IV, 2, 32; Limborch, *Theol. Christ.* II, 17, 25. 26. Limborch wants to admit that the divine essence belongs to the Son and the Spirit: *Colligimus, essentiam divinam et Filio et Spiritui Sancto esse communem*,. But he adds: *Sed est quaedam supereminentia Patris*

Against the Tritheists with their three equal divine natures and against the Subordinationians with their three unequal divine natures, the Christian Church holds that there can be no talk either of a multiplication (*multiplicatio*) or of a difference of degree (*subordinatio*) with regard to the divine *essence*, because one and the same divine essence, not merely according to the nature, but according to the number (*eadem numero essentia*), belongs to Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is the clear doctrine of the Scriptures.

The doctrines of Scripture teach the following: The divine essence or Godhead is present only once, or — as it has also been expressed — only in one example, 1 Cor. 8:4: οὐόεις θεός ει μη εις, and this Godhead, present only once, has each person whole. Thus, not in such a way that the first third of the divine essence would belong to the Father, the second third to the Son, and the third third to the Holy Spirit, but in such a way that the whole undivided divine essence would belong to both the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. This not only results from the infinity of the divine essence, which excludes any division, but this is also explicitly taught in Scripture. Col. 2:9 it says of the Son: In Him dwells παν το πλήρωμα τής θλεότητος, and Acts 5:4 it is said concerning the Holy Spirit in the talk of punishment to Ananias, Thou hast not lied to men, but τώ θεφ, where ó θεός certainly denotes the whole Godhead, not merely a third of it. That one and the same whole divine essence belongs to each of the three persons is also attested by the fact that, according to the baptismal command (Matt. 28:19) Father and Son and Holy Spirit have only one divine name (ονομα): βαπτίζοντες αυτους εις τό δνομα τοϋ πατρός και τον νιον και τον άγιον πνεύματος. Further: the divine majesty name of the Old Testament is Jehovah, יהוה [HEBREW]. This is the name of God, which is the eternal and

respectu Filii et Patris et Filii respectu Spiritus Sancti ratione dignitatis et potestatis. Dignius siquidem est generare quam generari, spirare quam spirari. [Google] Thus the first proposition that the *essentia divina* also belongs to the Son and the Holy Spirit is abandoned. Similarly Episcopus according to the words and the rationalistic reasoning. — On Kahnis as a subordinationian [Nitzsch-Stephan](#), p. 490. Extensive quotations from Kahnis's Dogmatics and Hofmann's "Scriptural Proof" [Baier II](#), 53 ff. The position of modern Lutherans in the doctrine of God is treated in detail in a longer series of articles under the heading "Der moderne Subordinationismus im Licht der Schrift," [L. u. W.](#) 40, 17-323. The author is Dr. Stöckhardt.

unchangeable divine being (the absolute being) or God in his essence (*essentia*). God Himself explains this name etymologically and factually Gen. 3:14: אֶלֹהִים אֶשֶׁר אֶלֹהִים [HEBREW] therefore *semper idem*. Luther says in reference to the name "Jehovah" as a designation of God: "It is called with him (God) pure Is or Essence."¹²³³ אֶלֹהִים [HEBREW] is also used of creatures

 1233) Luther's powerful words about the name "Jehovah" deserve to be read again and again. He writes [St. L. XX, 2057 f. in his writing of the Shem Hamphoras \[paragraphs # 75b-78\]](#): "Now we want to deal with the one name, called Jehovah, with which the devil and Jews do much sorcery and all kinds of abuse and idolatry. This name Jehovah, according to the Grammatica, comes from the word Haja or Hava, which means Latin, *fu*, in *praeterito*, *esse*; German, *wesen* or *sein*; and the J can be *nota nominis verbalis*. like Josaphat, Jesaias, Jeremias and many other names, and is as much as in Latin *ens*, in Greek *on*. We Germans must speak: he is, and thus becomes trigrammaton in Latin, dygrammaton in Greek, hexagrammaton in German, or if we want to take badly 'is', then it is also trigrammaton. That they now pretend that the name Jehovah should be unpronounceable, they do not know what they slur; if they mean the letters, it cannot be true, because he is called Jehovah. And if he can be written with pen and ink, why should he not also be called with the mouth, which is much better than pen and ink? Or why not also call him unwritable, illegible, unthinking? Summa, it is a lazy thing. But if they do it in honor, they should also do it in all other names and let them also be unpronounceable. For it is said, Thou shalt not take God's name in vain: therefore this also is evil. Nowhere does Scripture say that some of God's names should be unspeakable, otherwise all those who take God's name in vain would be innocent, because they would say they could not have called his name, let alone take it in vain. This is what they say, that God's essence, power, wisdom, goodness, and what else can be said of God is inexpressible, immeasurable, infinite, incomprehensible, etc., that not the letters or syllables, but that which is meant by them, is inexpressible. Yes, so one would have to speak of the ineffable name of God. For he has his being from no one, has neither beginning nor end, but is from eternity, in and of himself, so that his being cannot be called 'has been' or 'will be'; for he never began, nor can he begin to be, nor has he ceased, nor can he cease to be; but it is called with him the same is or being, which is Jehovah, Ex. 3:14. Since the creature was created, there is already his essence, and what is yet to come, there he is ready with his essence. In this way Christ speaks of his divinity, Jn. 8:58: "Before Abraham was, I am"; does not say: "I was then", as if he would not be anymore afterwards, but: "I am," that is, my being is eternal, has not been, will not be, but is a vain Is. Therefore, as his is, am, or essence is incomprehensible, so it is also inexpressible; for no creature can comprehend that which is eternal. Therefore the angels are eternally blessed, for

inasmuch as these have really or supposedly divine functions and divine prestige (persons in authority, Ps. 82:6; the idols of the heathen, Deut. 4:28), הַיְהוָה [HEBREW] is used only of God. Hence the designation: *Nomen Dei essenziale et incommunicabile*.¹²³⁴⁾ But this name is not only attached to the Father, but also to the Son and the Holy Spirit. The הַיְהוָה מַלְאָכִי [HEBREW] mentioned in Ex. 3:2, that is, the Messenger of God κατ' ἐξοχήν, the Son of God, is הַיְהוָה [HEBREW] himself, v. 4. 7. 15, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. According to Ps. 85:9 the people of the Old Covenant hear what הַיְהוָה הַקֹּדֶשׁ [HEBREW] speaks. But according to 2 Sam. 23:2; 1 Pet. 1:12, it is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jehovah and the Spirit of Christ, who spoke in the prophets. Thus the Holy Spirit is הַיְהוָה הַקֹּדֶשׁ [HEBREW]. In the New Testament the Son of God is called not only δ κύριος και θ θεός (John 20:28), but also δ ἀληθινός θεός (1 John 5:20), δ μέγας θεός (Titus 2:13), δ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων θεός (Romans 9:5). Likewise, Scripture gives the predicate θ θεός to the Holy Spirit in distinction from creatures, Acts 5:3-4: You did not lie to men, ἀλλὰ τῷ θεῷ.


Furthermore: As there is no division and no difference of degree in the divine essence, but to each person the whole divine essence belongs without division, so according to the Scriptures there is also no division and no difference of degree with regard to the divine attributes (*attributa divina*), the divine works (*opera divina ad extra*) and the divine worship (*cultus divinus*). — As far as 1. the divine attributes are concerned, the

they cannot get enough of the eternal being of God and rejoice nor comprehend it; and if it were to be comprehended, it could not be eternal, would itself also have to have an end or beginning, and could neither give nor receive a being to anyone, because it would itself be uncertain of its essence. Further, its wisdom, power, goodness, etc., is also eternal and incomprehensible, because it must be nothing else than its divine essence itself. Thirdly, which is probably higher, that in the divine being God is Father, Son, Holy Spirit, three persons in one, eternal, incomprehensible being. Yes, to say all this about God would be to call him an incomprehensible, inexpressible name. Who wants to name such a strange being, to think it out, to pronounce it, to write it out? In this way, perhaps, the ancients would have called the name Jehovah unpronounceable, because it means God's essence, according to the Grammatica, which (as heard) is called a vain Being from eternity and three Persons." [Ed. note: English edition pgs 385-386 note 18 is highly abridged and a free translation. Green highlighted text was omitted in translation. See my full translation from paragraphs #s 75-78 [here.](#)]

1234) More about this name under the section "The Holy Trinity in the Old Testament".

Scripture nowhere states that, for example, one third of the divine omnipotence or divine omniscience or divine omnipresence is attributed to the Father, the second third to the Son and the third to the Holy Spirit, but Scripture attributes these attributes without division and without limitation not only to the Father, but also to the Son and the Holy Spirit. The omnipotence (Jn. 10:28), the omniscience (Jn. 21:17), the omnipresence (Matt. 28:20) is ascribed to the Son. Likewise the Holy Spirit is ascribed without limitation the omnipotence (Ps. 33:6), the omniscience (1 Cor. 2:10), the omnipresence (Ps. 139:7). — Concerning 2. the divine works, the Scriptures say one and the same divine works (*opera ad extra*) not only of the Father, but also of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The creation of the world is a work of the Son (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16; Hebr. 1:10), but also a work of the Holy Spirit (Ps. 33:6; Job 33:4) etc. — 3. Because the three persons have one and the same Godhead and one and the same attributes and *operationes*, they also have one and the same divine worship: *Trium personarum unus est cultus divinus*. With respect to the Son, it is very particularly inculcated that all should honor the Son, καθὼς τιμῶσι τὸν πατέρα (John 5:23). As for the Holy Spirit, although Cardinal Gibbons,¹²³⁵ claims that the divine worship of the Holy Spirit cannot be proved from Scripture, it has become a part of the Christian faith through the tradition and authority of the Papal Church. But it is taught in Scripture wherever one and the same divine majesty and one and the same divine attributes and works are ascribed to the Holy Spirit. That the Holy Spirit has one and the same *cultus divinus* with the Father and the Son is expressed in the baptismal words Matt. 28:19. By being baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, we worship the Holy Spirit with the same *cultus divinus* as the Father and the Son. Athanasianum:¹²³⁶ *Ita ut per omnia, sicut iam supra dictum est, et Trinitas in unitate et unitas in Trinitate veneranda sit*. [“So that in all things, as has already been said above, both the Trinity in unity and the unity in the Trinity should be venerated.”]

1235) *The Faith of Our Fathers*, p. 111. [[1920: p. 89](#)]

1236) M., p. 31, 25 [[Trigl. 33, 25](#) ].

5. Objections to homousia or the unity of God. [^]

First objection: If Christ calls the Father "the only true God" (τοῦ μόνου ἀληθινὸν θεόν)), then homousia with the Father cannot belong to him. Answer: But it is precisely homousia that Christ so clearly and decisively claims for Himself. When Christ says, for example, John 10:30, Εγὼ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἐν ἑομεν, he declares that there is unity of essence between him and the Father. No other understanding of these words is possible, because Christ establishes with the ἐν ἑομεν the fact that, as to the Father, so also to Him no one can snatch the sheep out of His hand. But if Christ ascribes to Himself so decidedly unity of essence with the Father, how is it then that He still calls Himself next to the Father as an object which must be recognized by men if they are to become partakers of eternal life? We are not left to guess to answer this question, but Christ Himself gives us the answer in the immediately following words (v. 4): "I have glorified you on earth." According to this, it stands that "the only true God" can only be known in the Son sent into the world. Christ also describes this in detail in the longer passage Jn. 14:6-11, which begins with the words: "I am the way and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except by me." Also Jn. 17 the unity of essence with the Father is clearly expressed when Christ v. 2 says of Himself that He (Christ) gives eternal life, which is only due to the one true God. But the actual purpose of John 17 is to answer the great practical question of how the one true God, apart from whom there is no other, can be salvifically known by men. And this is done only in him whom God sent (ὁν ἀπέστειλάς Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν), in the incarnate Son of God. This is the reason why Christ Jn. 17:3 calls Himself the object of knowledge besides the only true God, as He immediately adds v. 4: "I have glorified you on earth," and v. 6: "I have revealed your name to men," and v. 14: "I have given them your word." So essentially correctly also Luthardt: "One has life only in God, who has revealed Himself as God of salvation only in Jesus Christ. This alone is ἀληθινός θεός thus not on the

contrary to Jesus Christ (so Arians, Socinians and Rationalists)." ¹²³⁷⁾ Luther,¹²³⁸⁾ to whom also Luthardt refers, shows quite powerfully that the Arians have perverted the words: "that thou alone art true God", "as if Christ had thereby excluded himself and ascribed the Godhead to the Father alone". But whoever does not flutter over the words, but looks at how they are "interlocked", must recognize that Christ "places eternal life at the same time in his and the Father's knowledge, and makes of both one and the same knowledge". Luther continues: "These words [John 17:3] are spoken most violently against the Arians and all heretics, Jews and unbelievers, who say and boast that they believe in only one God, who created heaven and earth, and for the sake of this article condemn us Christians, as if we were to impute another God. For he [Christ] would have them know that they know not the true and right God, though they mean and boast it; for they know not him that he is, nor how he ought to be known, that he is the one true God, who sent Jesus Christ. This is what is said: Whoever wants to meet the right, one God, must seek him only in the Lord Christ, for otherwise there is truly no God without who sent Christ. Whoever then does not have Christ must also lack the right, true God, even though he knows and believes that there is only one true God. For he does not believe in Him who sent Christ and through Him gives eternal life. Therefore the power lies in the little word 'you': That they may know thee, that thou alone art the true God. Which "you"? The one who sent Jesus Christ. As if he should say: The Jews and others also have only one God, as they think; but they do not recognize you, who alone are the true God, because they do not know Jesus Christ, sent by you, and at the same time paint for them a God according to their own thoughts, which truly is no God, but nothing at all. So you see how the word "alone" is not used to mean that he separates himself from God for the sake of the divine nature (because this is sufficiently prevented by the other words),

1237) See [Strack-Zöckler's commentary on](#) this passage.

1238) Sermon on Jn. 17:3. [St. L. VIII, 759 ff.](#)

but for the very reason that he binds both the Father and himself together, yes, he binds the Father to himself against all who portray another God or seek him elsewhere than in the Lord Christ. Furthermore,¹²³⁹⁾ Luther calls the knowledge of God that does not also recognize the one whom God has sent, Jesus Christ, "a knowledge of God on the left side," whereby God does not turn his actual face to man but "turns his back." For the knowledge of God without the knowledge of the Savior sent into the world does not go further than "to the knowledge of the law of Moses," according to which God grants life to men who do the law and judges and condemns those who transgress it. But this is not how the one true God is minded against men. God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world through him might be saved.¹²⁴⁰⁾ "Therefore," Luther continues, "turn around and let us see what the right face of God is." The right face of God is the one whom God sent into the world, Jesus Christ. Christ is מְלֶכֶךְ הַכּוֹהֲנִים [HEBREW] and God's πρόσωπον,¹²⁴¹⁾ And on the face of Jesus Christ, on which the whole world of men shall look,¹²⁴²⁾ it is written that God will not condemn a sinner, but will take all to heaven for Christ's sake. The inscription on the face of Christ reads: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He that teacheth and believeth another God, teacheth and believeth not τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν θεόν, but a God which he hath painted unto himself according to his own thoughts, "which verily is no God, but nothing at all," an idol. Hence the warning 1 John 5:21, "Little children, beware of idols!" For the Christian knowledge of God consists in this, v. 20: "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us a mind to know him that is true, and to be in him that is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. This [the Son Jesus Christ] is the true God and the eternal life." In these words, like John 17:3, it is stated that without the Son of God sent into the world there is no knowledge of the true God. Only

1239) [St. L. VIII, 1714.](#)

1241) Is. 63:9; 2 Cor. 4:6.

1240) Jn. 3:17; 1 Tim. 1:15.

1242) Matt. 17. 5.

here it is emphasized that the Son of God, Jesus Christ, is also himself $\delta \alpha\lambda\eta\theta\iota\nu\acute{o}\varsigma \theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$.¹²⁴³⁾

Second objection: Because the Son is of the Father (\acute{o} μονογενής παρά πατρός) and the Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son ($\tau\acute{o}$ πνεῦμα τον πατρός and το πνεῦμα τον υἱού), then the Son is less than the Father and the Holy Spirit less than the Father and the Son.¹²⁴⁴⁾

Answer: in this objection there is a denial of both the natural and the spiritual mind. Even in the natural realm, it is not true that the Son, whether physically or spiritually or in position and standing, is always inferior to the Father. But completely the objection is devoid of any spiritual understanding. According to God's self-revelation in His Word of God, it is impossible for the Son to be inferior to the Father and the Holy Spirit to be inferior to the Father and the Son, because each of the three Persons, as we have seen, has the divine essence (*eandem numero essentiam*) and the divine attributes and works (*eadem numero attributa et eadem numero opera ad extra*), which exist only once, whole and undivided. In still other words, each person in the Godhead is not a third, but the whole God. As Luther says in his theological theses *De unitate essentiae divinae et de distinctione personarum in divinitate*:¹²⁴⁵⁾ *Harum personarum quaelibet totus est Deus, extra quam nullus est alius Deus* ["Each of these persons is wholly God, apart from whom there is no other God"], and the Christian congregation sings after him in relation to the second person of the Godhead:¹²⁴⁶⁾ "And is no other God." Franz Delitzsch revealed that his spiritual understanding had sunk deeply below the Christian level when he raised the question in 1884, "Is it really permissible to call Jesus Christ, the Lord [Jehovah] of hosts, the one God, besides whom there is none?" and then answered the question in the negative.¹²⁴⁷⁾ With this Delitzsch said himself free of Col. 2:9: "In him [Christo] dwells παν το πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικώς," and if Delitzsch was clear about his "No", he has imagined the Son

1243) On the relation of the οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἀληθινός θεός και ζωή αἰώνιος to the Son of God mentioned immediately before, cf. Stöckhardt, [L. u. W. 40, p. 293](#) ff.

1244) Thus Arminians, newer Lutherans, etc.

1245) *Opp.* v. a. IV, 474; [St. L. X, 178](#).

1246) St. L. *Gesangb.*, no. 158, 2.

1247) *Allgemeine Ev.-Luth. Kirchenzeitung* 1884, No. 49.

of God as a half-god or as a third-god or similar. Every form of subordinatianism and kenosis (in the modern sense) represents a clear relapse into pagan polytheism. Zöckler says yes and no at the same time when he writes:¹²⁴⁸⁾ "Not actually heretical in nature is the subordinatianism of many fathers of the pre-Nicene period, of the Arminians Episcopus, Curcellaeus, Limborch, etc., of a large part of the supernaturalistic dogmatists, also of Kahnis, of the more positive representatives of Ritschl's school, etc., which holds to the consubstantiality of the three divine persons, but subordinates the Son and the Spirit to the Father." Whoever thinks of "subordinatianism" in terms of what the word says, thereby gives up the "equality of essence", as then also Kahnis expressly declares "that the Son is God only in the second sense of the word".¹²⁴⁹⁾

A renunciation of the Christian knowledge of God is also present when thoughts play into the reasoning of the lesser being of the Son and the Holy Spirit, as if the Son, because he is of the Father, is younger than the Father, and the Holy Spirit, because he is of the Father and of the Son, is younger than the Father and the Son. In this case, time, succession, is transferred to eternity, thus denying eternity and the eternal God, which even stands in contradiction with the natural knowledge of God, Rom. 1:20: ἡ τε ἀϊδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης, *scil.* is clearly seen (καθοραταῖ) in God's works of creation. Hence the Athanasian Creed: *Et in hac Trinitate nihil prius aut posterius, nihil maius aut minus, sed totae tres personae coaeternae sibi sunt et coaequales.* ["And in this Trinity there is nothing before or after, nothing greater or less, but all three persons are co-eternal and co-equal"]

The church's way of speaking is also to be judged according to this: *Pater prima, Filius secunda, Spiritus Sanctus tertia persona Trinitatis est.* This way of speaking is according to the Scriptures, because according to the Scriptures the Father has the divine essence from no other, but the Son as ὁ υἱὸς τὸν πατέρα has the divine essence from the Father, and the Holy Spirit as τὸ πνεῦμα τὸν πατέρα and as τὸ πνεῦμα τὸν υἱόν has the divine essence from the Father and from the Son. The ancient theologians therefore say: *Quod Pater dicitur prima, Filius secunda, Spiritus Sanctus tertia persona Trinitatis, ordo naturalis enumerationis est* (the order of the natural enumeration), *fundatus*

1248) *Handbuch der theol. Wissenschaften* 2 III, 91.

1249) *Dogmatik* 2 I, 361.

in origine seu emanatione personarum unius ab alia. Pater, qui non est ab alio, sed a seipso et est is, a quo procedit alius, nempe Filius et Spiritus Sanctus, prima persona est. Filius est secunda persona, quia non est a seipso, ab eo tamen alius, videlicet Spiritus Sanctus. Spiritus Sanctus est tertia persona, quia non est a seipso nec ab eo alius. [Google] But if one constructs from this order a subordination according to time (*tempus*) or dignity (*dignitas*), then again there is a transfer of human and temporal relationships to the eternal God, which is contrary to reason and contrary to Scripture.

Third objection: Because the Scriptures use the expression that the divine works in the kingdom of nature and in the church are accomplished "through" (διά, εν) the Son and "by" the Holy Spirit, a subordination is thus indicated. Answer: this way of speaking is, however, a fact, as is evident, for example, from the following scriptural passages: John 1:3: πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ [the Son] ἐγένετο, Col. 1:16: ἐν αὐτῷ [the Son] ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα, Eph. 1:4: ἐλέξατο ἡμᾶς ἐν αὐτῷ [the Son], Ps. 33:6: "The heavens were made by the word (בְּדִבְרֵי הַיְהוָה [HEBREW]), and all his host by the spirit of his mouth" (בְּרוּחַ הַיְהוָה [HEBREW]), 2 Thess. 2:13: "God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation ἐν ἀγιασμῷ πνεύματος καὶ πίστει ἀληθείας. But erroneously from this is inferred a subordination of the Son and the Holy Spirit. According to Scripture it stands thus: as there is an order, but not a subordination, in the three Persons (*ordo in modo subsistendi*), so there is an order in the efficacy of the Persons (*ordo in modo operandi*). As the Son is of the Father, so also is His activity of the Father, John 5:19: οὐ δύναται ὁ υἱὸς ποιεῖν ἄφ' ἑαυτοῦ οὐδὲν ἐὰν μὴ τι βλέπῃ τὸν πατέρα ποιῶντα. And as the Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son, so also the working of the Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son, John 16:13-15: the Holy Spirit οὐ λαλήσει ἄφ' ἑαυτοῦ, ἀλλ' ὅσα ἀκούσει λαλήσει ... ἐκ τοῦ ἔμοῦ λαμβάνει. But the efficacy is not thereby divided, but the efficacy remains one according to number (*una numero actio*), and as to the Father, so also to the Son, and also to the Holy Spirit, it comes wholly. Jn. 5:19 the fact that the Son can do only what He sees the Father do is declared by the numerical identity of the activity: ἃ γὰρ ἂν ἐκεῖνος ποιῇ, ταῦτα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ὁμοίως ποιεῖ. Therefore the ancient theologians remark on Jn. 5:19

rightly: *Verba non impotentiam indicant, sed eandem maiestatem divinam, quia eandem numero habent potentiam et operationem.* ["The words do not indicate impotence, but the same divine majesty, because they have the same power and operation in number"] Because the effect is undivided between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, in a number of scriptural passages the whole divine value is also ascribed to one person without naming the other persons; thus to the Son the work of creation, Heb. 1:10: Σὺ κατ' ἀρχάς, κύριε, τὴν γῆν ἐθεμελίωσας, καὶ ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν σου εἰσιν οἱ οὐρανοί, and so to the Holy Spirit the work of distributing the gifts in the church, 1 Cor. 12:11: "But all these things the same one Spirit worketh, dividing to every one his according as he will, καθὼς βούλεται."

Fourth objection: Jn. 14:28-29 Christ says of Himself that the Father is greater than the Son (ο πατήρ μείζων μου εστιν). Answer: here Christ speaks of a inferiority in relationship to the Father that ceases with the return to the Father, that is, of Himself according to human nature in a state of humiliation. Therefore, the disciples should not be sad about Christ's going to the Father, but on the contrary rejoice, because now the inferiority comes to an end. Christ's going to the Father is the entrance into the state of exaltation according to His human nature. Christ Himself declares these words (John 14:28) with the words in the high priestly prayer (chap. 17:5): "glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was!" Luther:¹²⁵⁰) "That Christ says: 'The Father is greater than I', he does not speak of the personal divine being, his or the Father's, as the Arians falsely address this text and do not want to see what or why Christ is speaking of here, but of the difference between the kingdom, which he is to have with the Father, and his service or servant form, in which he was before his resurrection. Now I am small, he wants to say, in my ministry and servant form, as he says elsewhere, Matt. 20:28: 'The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life for the redemption of many.' That means to become small, as St. Paul says Phil. 2:8, to be humbled or thrown down under everything, to let sin, death, the devil, the world tread over him. This is the course I am walking from you. But it shall not remain in such smallness, for that would have come to nothing,

1250) St. L. XI, 1079 f.

but shall be a passageway and the very way and means by which I come to the Father, when I shall no longer be small, but shall be as great and omnipotent as He is, and shall reign and rule with Him forever." In his sermon on John 14:28, 29, [Luther](#) treats the same subject in even greater detail. He says:¹²⁵¹⁾ "This passage, though it is plainly spoken, was used by the heretics who denied the deity of Christ, and they were probably displeased by it. For they ran hard against the Christians with it, saying: Then hearest thou the Lord's own word, that he saith the Father is greater than he. If then the Father is greater than he, Christ is not like him; therefore he cannot be like him, eternal God. And did great, murderous harm with this passage. For the rabble and simple-minded people, having neither understanding nor spirit, are easily caught with such talk and cannot defend themselves." Luther then points out that St. Hilary and Augustine also did not understand this passage correctly. Hilarius had meant that "the Father is greater *non natura seu essentia, sed auctoritate* ["not by nature or essence, but by authority"], not because of the divine essence, but only because the Son is from the Father, not again, the Father from the Son. According to this, Augustine also acted on this passage and thus said: "the Son is less than mankind". Luther apologetically adds: "I let that go and be good, because the dear fathers did what they could. But it goes, as one speaks: Who does not understand the language, must lack the understanding and takes probably a cow for a horse. So again, even if one knows the language and yet does not understand the thing of which one speaks, he must be lacking." Luther then proves from the context that Christ here speaks of Himself not according to His divine nature, nor according to His human nature per se, but according to His human nature in the state of humiliation: "The Father is greater than I, because now I am a servant; but when I come again to My Father, then I shall become greater, that is, as great as the Father is, that is, I shall reign with Him in equal power and majesty. ... So Christ goes out of this narrow stable of distress into the wide heaven, out of this dungeon into his great, glorious kingdom, being much greater than before. Before, he was

1251) [St. L. VIII, 477 ff.](#)

a poor, miserable, suffering and dying Christ; but now, with the Father, he is a great, glorious, living, almighty Lord over all creatures."

The correct view of Jn. 14:28 is held in our time by Philippi, Hengstenberg, Keil, Nösgen, Luthardt, Stöckhardt. They understand the statement ὁ πατήρ μείζων μου ἐστίν of the Son's being little in the state of humiliation, which comes to an end by going to the Father. Any other view is contrary to the text. When Meusel (VI, 476) says that Meyer arrived at subordinatianism by "exegetical" means, for "exegetical" substitute "unexegetical." Whoever does not bring subordinatianism, will not find it taught in Jn. 14:28. Meyer is here doing "dogmatic" exegesis, a method which modern theology, especially in its renowned representatives, so consistently extends to the clearest passages of Scripture that it finds neither the *satisfactio vicaria* nor the inspiration of Scripture, neither the deity of Christ nor the Trinity, neither the Christian doctrine of justification nor even the Christian doctrine of the Church taught in Scripture.

6. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity in the Old Testament. [^](#)

Because this is a much disputed point, we will treat it under a special section. Luther's position can be briefly summarized thus: Although the holy Trinity is not so clearly revealed in the Old Testament as in the New, it is nevertheless "mightily" attested there. "So then three persons in the divine essence are understood immediately in the beginning of the world and through the prophets afterward, but ultimately fully revealed through the gospel." ¹²⁵²⁾ To the objection whether he (Luther) believes that all Jews have recognized the triune God, his answer is: ¹²⁵³⁾ "Although the majority has not believed this doctrine, as even today the Turks and Jews do not agree with us. And what is more, among those who hear our sermon [in the New Testament] there are also many who neither respect nor believe such doctrines. For the same thing happens to them that Isaiah says of his listeners in chapter 6, that their hearts are hardened and their ears thick, and their eyes

1252) [St. L. I, 274.](#) 1253) [St. L. II, 940.](#)

blinded, that they see not with their eyes," etc. Like Luther, the Lutheran theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and beyond find the doctrine of the Trinity revealed in the Old Testament to such an extent that believers recognized and believed it. In contrast, the Helmstedts, under Georg Calixt's leadership, maintained that "the mystery of the Trinity had been known in some way to the patriarchs and prophets by God's special revelation, but was not so contained in the Old Testament Scriptures that it could be found there by anyone at one time, nor could it be found there now, apart from the New Testament. Traces (*vestigia*) or rather indications (*indicia*) of the Trinity were found there, but no clear and convincing sayings."¹²⁵⁴) If we look at more recent theologians, Luthardt says:¹²⁵⁵) "The Old Testament contains only the presuppositions of the Trinitarian knowledge of God, because of the Trinitarian revelation of God; only the New Testament brought with it also that." And about the proof of Scripture of the old Lutheran teachers Luthardt judges:¹²⁵⁶) "This proof of Scripture rests almost throughout on incorrect or forcible exegesis and in general on an unhistorical view which fails to recognize the gradual course of revelation." Kirn then drives *tabula rasa* and stoops to the assertion:¹²⁵⁷) "Today no theologian will find in the Old Testament for proofs of the Trinity."

All controversy over the revelation of the Holy Trinity in the Old Testament is put to rest within the Christian Church by the fact that Christ and the apostles of Christ teach and demonstrate the divine personality of both the Son and the Holy Spirit from the Old Testament. Matt. 22:41 ff. Christ proves from the 110th Psalm that the Messiah is not only David's Son, but also David's Lord. "David's Lord", however, does not merely denote the "germ" or the "hint" of a personality, but a fully formed and fully expressed person, as everyone must admit. In passing, Christ teaches Matt. 22 also immediately teaches the divine personality of the Holy Spirit from the Old Testament when he says that David, through the Holy Spirit (ἐν πνεύματι), calls the Messiah his Lord. With this the Savior says

1254) Bei Quenstedt I, 510. 1255) [Compendium](#) ¹⁰, S. 112.

1256) [op. cit.](#), p. 111. 1257) RE.³ XX, 112.

what David already says about himself in 2 Sam. 23:2: "The Spirit of Jehovah (רוּחַ יְהוָה [HEBREW]) has spoken through me." In the 1st chapter of Hebrews, the deity of Christ, and thus the divine personality of Christ, is set forth from six Old Testament passages: Ps. 2:7; 2 Sam. 7:14; Ps. 97:7; Ps. 45:7; Ps. 102:26-28; Ps. 110:1. If we look at the predicates of the Messiah in the passages mentioned (founding the earth, loving righteousness and hating unrighteousness, kingdom and dominion, divine worship), everyone must admit that not only the "germ" of a personality but the full personality is attributed to the Messiah. Read also Ps. 110:1 ff., where Christ is described both as the ruler over His people and over the whole earth and as the priest who reconciles men with God. Concerning the revelation of the personality of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament it should be said: When the Old Testament says of the Spirit of God that He was active in creation, Gen. 1:2, judged or rebuked the human race, Gen. 6:3, spoke through David, 2 Sam. 23:1-3, was indignant and embittered by the children of Israel, Is. 63:10, תָּמָה בְּרוּי וְנִעְצְבוּ אֶת־רוּחַ קְדֹשׁוֹ [HEBREW], the divine personality of the Holy Spirit is clearly taught in these *actiones et passiones*. Finally, the Old Testament does not lack such scriptural passages in which (similar to the New Testament, Matt. 28:19 and 2 Cor. 13:13) the three persons of the Godhead are mentioned side by side. Such a passage is obviously Is. 63:8-10: For he (הוּא [HEBREW]) said, They are indeed my people, children who are not false. Therefore he was their Savior. He that afflicted them afflicted him also;¹²⁵⁸⁾ and the angel that is before him (וְמַלְאָךְ בְּנִי [HEBREW] [Isaiah 63:9] the angel of his countenance, the *angelus increatus*, the Son of God¹²⁵⁹⁾, helped them. He redeemed them, because he loved them and spared them. He took them up and carried them from time immemorial. But they embittered and outraged his Holy Spirit (רוּחַ קְדֹשׁוֹ [HEBREW]).

Having thus established from the divine names and the divine predicates the divine personality of both the Son and the Holy Spirit, it is quite natural to refer also the Old Testament passages to the Trinity,

1258) According to the K'ri לֹא [HEBREW] [Isaiah 63:9].

1259) See the following explanation about the "angel of Jehovah".

a. In which God speaks of Himself in the plural, like Gen. 1:26: "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness"; Gen. 3:22: "Adam was made as one of us"; Gen. 11:7: "Come, let us go down and confound their language there" etc.; b. In which God is called upon and praised threefold, as Num. 6:24-26: "The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace!" with the addition (v. 27): "For you shall take my name upon the children of Israel, that I may bless them." Further, the Trishagion Is. 6:3: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts! All the earth is full of his glory!"

To the treatment of the question whether the holy Trinity is revealed in the Old Testament also belongs the discussion of the scriptural passages which speak of the מַלְאָךְ ה' [HEBREW][*Angel of the Lord*] and ascribe to itself divine names and predicates. They are found throughout the Old Testament from Genesis (ch. 22:11 ff.: Isaac's sacrifice) to the prophet Malachi (ch. 3:1 ff.: the angel of the covenant). In the former place it says v. 11-18: "Then the angel of the Lord called out to him [Abraham] from heaven and said: Abraham, Abraham! He answered, Here am I. And he said, Take not thine hand unto the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, and hast not spared thine only begotten Son for my sake" (already this "for my sake" completely excludes the relation to an *angelus creatus*). And not only does Abraham call v. 14 the place "The Lord (מַלְאָךְ ה' [HEBREW]) behold," but "the angel of the Lord" speaks to Abraham again and refers to himself v. 15-17 as Jehovah, who has sworn by himself that he will bless and multiply Abraham's seed like the stars in the sky and like the sand on the shore of the sea. That also by these statements the relation to a created angel is absolutely excluded is obvious. Especially detailed information about the "angel of the Lord", the messenger of God κατ' ἐξοχήν, gives us the passage Ex. 3:1-15. Moses comes as a shepherd in the land of Midian with his flock to Mount Horeb. There מַלְאָךְ ה' [HEBREW][*Angel of the Lord*] appears to him in a fiery flame from the bush. Because the bush is not consumed by the fire, Moses steps closer to inquire why the bush is not burning. Until then, it was still possible to believe in the appearance of an *angelus*

creatus can still be thought of. But from v. 4 on, this assumption is excluded. It says v. 4: "When Jehovah saw that Moses was coming, God called out to him from the bush, 'Do not come near!'" Here "the angel of the Lord" is called Jehovah himself. But more. The Angel of the Lord continues to address Moses, referring to Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and as the God of His people Israel, whom He now intends to redeem from the bondage of Egypt through Moses' ministry. And when Moses presses for a still closer designation of Him who sent him, the angel of the Lord defines himself as אֱלֹהֵי אֲשֶׁר אֱהְיֶה [Lord][Exodus 3:14], as the essential, unchanging God. Luthardt's objection that the identification of the מַלְאָךְ הַיְהוָה [HEBREW][Angel of the Lord] with הַיְהוָה [HEBREW][Lord] declares, that a created angel as a representative or messenger of Jehovah could very well call himself Jehovah is certainly not valid. If, for example, the English envoy had the idea of introducing himself in Washington as His Majesty the King of England, this would result in his immediate recall.

The passages in which the "angel of the Lord" is identified with Jehovah are numerous. A longer list of these passages with their exposition can be found in Gerhard.¹²⁶⁰⁾ Luther says about the Maleach Jehovah in a sermon:¹²⁶¹⁾ "So the patriarch Jacob distinguishes the persons Gen. 48:15-16: 'The God who has nourished me all my life until this day, the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless these boys, that they may grow and become many,' etc. Here he gives the Lord Christ the name and calls him an angel, not that he is an angel because of his nature or essence, for that would be a public idolatry, that he should call upon an angel and ask for his blessing. For this reason, however, he calls him an angel, so that he should not lead his being everywhere like the invisible God, but should be sent on earth, clothed in our flesh and sacrificed for our sin. As Christ also used to say in the New Testament: 'The Father who sent me'; again: 'As the Father has sent me' and in the prophet Isaiah 61:1: 'The Lord has sent me to heal the brokenhearted'; again Is. 63:9: '*Angelus faciei*

1260) *Loci, L. De Natura Dei*, § 36. 37.

1261) On Sunday Trin. [St. L. XIII, 670 f.](#)

eius salvavit eos; the angel who is before him helped them'. So Malachi calls Christ an angel of the Testament, Mal. 3:1. So that the two names, God and angel, give two different persons and yet the essence is completely one and without all difference. For the angel is also eternal, natural God, otherwise Jacob would not call upon him; but he is called an angel for his office and command, which he has as the Son from the Father." In our time the correct view of the Maleach Jehovah as *angelus increatus* is held by Hengstenberg, Keil, Thomasius, Rohnert, Philippi. Philippi writes:¹²⁶²⁾ "The Maleach Jehovah is distinct from Jehovah personally and yet one with Him." He refers to the following passages: Gen. 16:7-14; chap. 18:19; 21:17-19; 22:11-18; 31:11-13, compare with 28:11-22; 33:25-30, compare with Hos. 12:5; 48:15 f. ; Ex. 3:1-7; 13:21, compare with 14:19; 23:20 f.; 33:14 and Is. 63:8-9; Jos. 5:13; 6:2; Judg. 6:11-24; 13:3-25. Philippi adds that according to "the simplest and most natural interpretation," these passages "represent the Maleach Jehovah as an uncreated angel, identical with Jehovah, to whom divine attributes, actions, names, and worship are ascribed. If one were to regard this merely as an exuberant, Oriental mode of expression, one would thereby lose all firm ground of Scripture interpretation under one's feet and would fall in consistent succession to the rationalistic evaporation of even the firmest and most indissoluble revelation."¹²⁶³⁾ Also, from what the Scriptures teach about the Maleach

1262) *Doctrine of Faith* 3 III, 191.

1263) Likewise [Joseph Addison Alexander](#) in his shorter [commentary on Isaiah, Vol. II, p. 394](#), in the exposition of Is. 63:9: "The old Christian doctrine is that the Angel of God's presence, who is mentioned in the passages already cited, and from time to time in other books of the Old Testament (Gen. 28:13; 31:11; 48:16; Ex. 3:2; Josh. 5:14; Judg. 13:6; Hos. 12:5; Zech. 3:1; Mal. 3:1; Ps. 34:8), was that Divine Being who is represented in the New Testament as the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His Person (Heb. 1:3), the image of God (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15), in whose face the glory of God shines (2 Cor. 4:6), and in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9). For the true sense of what follows [viz. Is. 63:9], as to taking up and carrying them, see above, on chap. 46:3. The verb *redeem* is not only of frequent occurrence in these prophecies (chap. 43:1; 44:22, 23; 48:20; 49:7, etc.), but is expressly applied elsewhere to the redemption of Israel from Egypt (Ex. 6:5; Ps. 74:2; 77:16) and is therefore applicable to all other analogous deliverances."

Jehovah, what Luther says about the doctrine of the Trinity in the Old Testament in general is confirmed:¹²⁶⁴⁾ "In the New Testament everything is clearly and powerfully testified of the holy divine three-foldness or Trinity, which is not so clearly emphasized in the Old Testament, but is nevertheless also powerfully indicated." When Kirn, as we have already heard, made the lofty assertion that nowadays no theologian would want to find proofs for the Trinity in the Old Testament, he more than cast doubt on his own quality as a theologian. Above all, he did not consider that he was accusing Christ and his apostles of false evidence, because they, as we have seen, prove the Holy Trinity from the Old Testament.¹²⁶⁵⁾

7. The incomprehensibility of the Trinity for human reason. [^](#)

We dare not, on the one hand, draw a distinction between the divine person and the divine essence, because Scripture ascribes to each person, not merely the Father, but also the Son and the Holy Spirit, not only a part but the whole of the Godhead. To the Son comes παν το πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος (Col. 2:9), and the Holy Spirit is absolutely δ θεός (Acts 6:4). Luther expresses it this way: ¹²⁶⁶⁾ *Quomodo distinguatur persona a divinitate ipsa, non est rationis inquirere, nec angelis*

1264) The Three Symbols. [St. L. X, 1019](#).

1265) This point is also asserted primarily by the old Lutheran theologians against all who claim that the Trinity cannot be proven from the Old Testament. On the one hand, they say with Luther that the Old Testament testimonies to the Trinity do not have the same clarity as the New Testament testimonies. On the other hand they say with Quenstedt, I, 516: *Solis Veteris Testamenti testimoniis (Christus et apostoli) Iudaeos convicerunt et mysteria haec unice ex Scripturis Veteris Testamenti demonstrarunt. Matt. 22:46; Act. 18:24. 28. Aut itaque ελεγχος Christi et apostolorum fuit sufficiens et Iudaei ex solis Veteris Testamenti testimoniis convinci potuerunt, aut inepte Christus et apostoli ex invalido et inidoneo principio cum illis disputarunt; quod dictu impium.* [[Google](#)] And with Kromayer, *Theol. Pos.-pol. I*, 146: *Mirari subit, quod haec thesis [Trinitatem ex Vetere Testamento. probari posse] ante annos non ita multos ab iis, qui Augustanae Confessionis esse volunt socii, fuerit impugnata. Nec enim ipsos praeterire potuit, quod in conflictu cum Iudaeis, Novum Testamentum non recipientibus, ex solo Vetere Testamento haec thesis a nostratibus tam firmiter fuerit asserta, ut ἀνίκητος καὶ ἀκίνητος hucusque substituerit.* [[Google](#)]

1266) Opp. v. a.. IV, 474. German: [St. L. X, 178](#).

comprehensibile. Imo periculosum et cavendum est ibi, ullam esse putari distinctionem, cum sit quaelibet persona ipsissimus et totus Deus. [Google] Luther opposes the scholastics who wanted to put a distinction between divine person and divine being and judges that those scholastics did not know what they were talking about. He says: *Prustranea est cogitatio et nihili Scoti et similium, qui formalem vel aliam distinctionem hic finxerunt. Nesciunt, quid loquantur vel affirmant, dum talibus sapientiae pharmacis rationem iuvare volunt. Nam utcumque ista subtiliter dici videantur, ratio tamen non capit distinctionem formalem esse aliam quam realem seu essentialem.*

[Google] On the other hand, we must place between the three persons a distinction not merely imagined, but real, since Scripture describes the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as ἄλλος καὶ ἄλλος καὶ ἄλλος, and only the Son, not also the Father and Holy Spirit, became man. Thus we stand before the fact which Luther, *loc. cit.* thus expresses, *Ratio non capit, unam rem indistinctam esse tres res distinctas.* ["Reason does not hold that one indistinct thing should be three distinct things."] And this fact, like Luther, also forces us to confess: *Excludenda est igitur mathematica et omnis totius creaturae cogitatio in credenda divinitate.* ["Therefore mathematics and every thought of the whole creature must be excluded in believing in the divinity."] Therefore, it cannot be warned seriously enough against all attempts to make the doctrine of the Trinity comprehensible to human reason.

The Attempts at Explanation. The Christian may be reminded of the three persons of the Godhead in the one God by things he sees in the realm of nature, but he is not to cite these things as proof or even as a confirmation of the Trinity.¹²⁶⁷⁾ That it is impossible to recognize and to prove the Trinity

 1267) Thus Luther ([1, 1150 f.](#)) points out that the Fathers "at times adduced and used inconvenient, at times also weak proofs, as among their disciples and hearers, to establish and prove the article of the Trinity". Thus they gave occasion to the Jews to assert that "our whole doctrine of the Trinity is unjust and false." But Luther adds: "If then the foundation is taken [from the clear words of Scripture which teach the Trinity], it is well permitted to declare and adorn the matter with allegory or figure (*addere lucem causae et ornare causam*). So Augustine himself does not prove the Trinity from the fact that he speaks of three different powers (*potentiae*) in man, and yet it is a nice thought that one looks for footprints and characteristics (*vestigia*) of the divine Trinity in man and all creatures at the same time. As Peter Lombard also does, that every thing is ordered and created with gravity, greatness and number; again, that in every thing that has a

from the realm of nature, results from the fact that the works of God, which refer to the creatures (the creation and preservation of the world), are common to the three persons (*opera vel ad extra*). On every little grass it stands clearly recognizable to every man who uses his intellect (vous): "God made me." *Praesentemque refert quaelibet herba Deum*. But on the little grass it is not written: "God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit made me", because there are not three omnipotent powers and three omnipotent acts, but only one omnipotent power and one omnipotent act according to the number (*una numero omnipotentia, una numero actio omnipotentiae*) to each person of the divine majesty completely and undividedly. That the one true God, who made and sustains heaven and earth and all that is in them, is Father and Son and Holy Spirit, God tells and teaches us only in his Word, in which he speaks to us in human language, as one man to another man, and reveals to us, as Luther puts it,¹²⁶⁸⁾ "what and how God is inwardly in himself or in his inward being." "Such things are not explored, climbed, or ascended by human reason, but are revealed above from heaven [in God's Word]." Therefore, all evidence for the Trinity taken from the realm of nature must be refrained from.

However, we must also refrain from trying to derive the Holy Trinity through our human thinking (speculation) from the divine essence itself (e.g. from the divine mind and will) or from the divine attributes (e.g. from the attribute of love).¹²⁶⁹⁾ In this respect, the later Melanchthon already provided it within the Lutheran Church,

size, consider the length, width and thickness; that in the philosophy be *ens verum unum*, in the sun its substance, light and heat. With such passages it is impossible to penetrate the adversaries of the Word; but to us they are lovely similes and characteristics of the article of the Trinity, which we have otherwise founded and proved, and which is known to us."

1268) [St. L. XII, 629 f.](#)

1269) Cf. on the "Augustinian doctrine of love" *De Trin.* [Richard of St. Victor](#) seeks to show (*De Trin.* III, 14) that the fellowship of love can be in no less than three persons. (In Philippi, [Glaubensl. 2 II, 172.](#)) In our time [Sartorius](#) has become known as a representative of the "love trinity" also in America. (The Doctrine of Holy Love, Section I, 7 ff. in Philippi, loc. cit.)

in the *Corpus Doctrinae Misnicum: Filium Dei cogitatione a Patre genitum esse, quia Pater sese intuens et considerans gignat quandam substantialem sui imaginem et permanentem, sicut nostra mens accidentalem et evanescentem gignit*. [“That the Son of God was begotten of the Father in thought, because the Father looking and considering himself produces a certain substantial and permanent image of himself, just as our mind produces an accidental and evanescent one.”] The Reformed philologist and theologian [Keckermann](#) († 1609) wanted to demonstrate to the anti-Trinitarians that the trinity of persons derives from the very essence of God (*promanare*) in the sense that God could not be God unless there were three distinct modes of existence or persons. After proving this, he would also bring testimonies from Scripture for the Trinity.¹²⁷⁰⁾ Both Melancthon and Keckermann were able to appeal — in whole or in part — to a whole host of predecessors (from Augustine onward and earlier) for their construct-trinitarian ideas.¹²⁷¹⁾ The Lutheran dogmatists rightly remind us very firmly that the Holy Trinity can only be known and proven from God's revelation in His Word. [Quenstedt](#) says¹²⁷²⁾ against all who want to derive the Son from the divine understanding (*per modum intellectionis*) and the Holy Spirit from the divine will (*per modum volitionis*): *Destituitur autoritate Sacrae Scripturae. Nullum enim manifestum dictum in Sacris Literis pro ea re habetur, scii. Filium Dei cogitatione vel per intellectum Patris esse genitum, Spiritum Sanctum vero per voluntatem procedere*. [[Google](#)] Against Keckermann Quenstedt remarks: *Nunquam obtinebit, Dei intellectum, in se reflexum, ex ista reflexione imaginem ab intelligente distinctam producere, Deique voluntatem, in se reflexam, ex ista reflexione amorem a voluntate distinctum spirare*. [[Google](#)] Quenstedt points out the harm of such speculations with the words: *Nihil aliud effecit [Keckermannus] istis ambagibus, quam ut, dum in lubricum rationis collocasset sublime mysterium, adversariis exponeret cavillationibus*. [[Google](#)]¹²⁷³⁾

1270) Quoted from Keckermann's *Systema Theol., lib. 1, c. 3*, in Gerhard, *Loci, L. De Trinitatis Mysterio*, § 27.

1271) Cf. Quenstedt 1, 554, Antithesis. 1272) A. a. Q, p. 559.

1273) [Philippi](#) recalled op. cit, p. 181, to a correct statement of [Twisten \[in his Dogmatics I, 196\]](#) that it is questionable to base one's conviction on such supposed philosophical proofs, because it corrupts the sense of true certainty and accustoms the mind to take probabilities for evidence and shadows for truth in matters of faith: because it leads to disregarding the actual divine ground of Christian conviction; because it makes the doctrine itself suspicious to the prudent, which is to be supported by such doubtful arguments. Certainly a true word!

Let us never forget: Those who allow themselves to have their own human thoughts regarding the divine Trinity are actually allowing themselves to play the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures instruct us that only the Holy Spirit knows the depths of the Godhead and what is in God.¹²⁷⁴⁾ It is a self-conceit bordering on madness when a short-sighted man, who does not even know what is in his own kind, namely in man,¹²⁷⁵⁾ imagines that he can know what is in the majestic God, who dwells in a light where no man can come.¹²⁷⁶⁾

Since modern theology denies that the Scriptures are the Word of God, and consequently has moved from the Scriptures to the "I" of the theologizing subject, it can naturally present only human thoughts about the Trinity. And because the theologizing "I" are many, we are also confronted with a great variety and diversity of "I" thoughts about the Trinity. But we can divide the different I-products into two classes. Some of them openly let Unitarianism rise out of their ego. They declare explicitly that they consider neither the Son nor the Holy Spirit to be a divine person. Even if they still use the expressions Father, Son, Holy Spirit, they openly state that they understand by them three different "potencies", wills or modes of action of the one divine person. We have here, according to the matter — often also according to the expressions — the revival of the old modalistic and dynamistic monarchianism, respectively of Socinianism. They claim that the *tres distinctae personae*, which the "old orthodox" doctrine professes, leads theoretically and practically to tritheism, to the assumption of three gods. The eternal essence trinity (ontological trinity) is converted into a historical trinity (economic trinity). This is the liberal wing of modern theology. In a second class we can count the theologians who are summarized under the overall name of the "conservative" newer theology. They, too, because they have gone through the move from the Holy Scriptures into the theologizing subject, want to develop the Trinity first from their I, but then from the I they want to seek the way back from the

1274) 1 Cor. 2:11: τα τον θεον ουδεις οιδεν, ει μη το πνεύμα τον θεον.

1275) 1 Cor. 2:11: Τίς γάρ οιδεν ανθρώπων τά τον άνθρωπον, ει μη τό πνεύμα τον άνθρωπον το εν αυτοις;

1276) 1 Tim. 6:16; Jn. 1:18.

economic Trinity to the essence Trinity. They want to prove that the threefold divine mode of action, which the Christian I experiences in itself, corresponds to a pre-worldly, metaphysical threefold relationship in God (in "the eternal depths of the Godhead"). There is a kind of feud between the liberal and conservative parties. It is not difficult for the latter to prove the former's return to Unitarianism. Unfortunately, however, the liberals are also able to demonstrate that the conservative trend with its attempts to renew the doctrine of the Trinity "for the time being" does not yet stand in harmony "with the Reformation and Old Protestantism". They state, for example: The conservative trend indulges in attempts to construct the Trinity from the concept of "love," etc., in order to make the Trinity comprehensible to human reason in this way. Furthermore, the conservative trend teaches a subordination of the persons in their relationship to each other. Also, it does not want to grasp the concept of the person in God as an "individual" personality, but thinks that it has to adjust a new concept of "person". These are all things that do not stand in harmony with the old Protestant doctrine of the Trinity.¹²⁷⁷⁾ This is true, however. The conservative modern theology will not come into harmony with the Christian Church even with regard to its doctrine of the Trinity until it believes again with the Christian Church that the Holy Scriptures are God's infallible Word, completely abandons the "I" as a theological principle, and therefore also believes and teaches of the Holy Trinity only that which God Himself has revealed to us men about it in His Word.¹²⁷⁸⁾

With regard to the question whether the Christian doctrine of the Trinity contradicts human reason, Karl Hase says¹²⁷⁹⁾ not badly: "Church doctrine does not have to get involved in a dispute on the basis of principles of reason, since it rather concedes to these [the principles of reason] everything that they demand, that the Trinity is above reason and, as soon as it wants to judge it, also against reason." Only Hase should have added that reason, which wants to judge the Trinity and deny the Trinity,

1277) Cf. [Nitzsch-Stephan](#), p. 432 ff.

1278) Cf. a further elaboration on this point in the doctrine of Christ's person under the section "*Unio personalis* and the Christological Constellations of the Modern Era," [Vol. II, pp. 114 ff.](#)

1279) [Hutterus Redivivus](#) 10, p. 180.

is no longer reason, but the climax of unreason. In his exposition of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, Luther repeatedly points out how unreasonable it is when we poor men, who do not understand the nature of the nature surrounding us and our own nature, want to judge God's nature with our human thoughts and especially deny the scriptural doctrine of the Trinity. He says, for example: ¹²⁸⁰⁾ "If it were a matter of sophists here, I would very well be able to do it, and I am neither a Jew nor a Turk. But I thank my God, who has done me the grace, that I do not dispute about such an article, whether it is true or rhymes, but because I see that it is so actually conceived and founded in the Scriptures, I believe God more than my own thoughts and reason and do not care at all how it can be true that there is only one being and yet three different persons in such a unified being, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. For it is not a matter of disputing whether it is true, but whether it is founded in the Word of God. ... Therefore, since the Word of God, as we have now heard, stands clear and plain, and since such an article has been so gallantly contended for by the holy Fathers, let us stick to it and not argue much about how Father, Son and Holy Spirit can be one God. Poor man, if you use all the art of the world, you cannot know how it is that your eyes can see a high mountain ten miles away; again, if you are asleep, how it is that you are dead in body and yet alive. If then we cannot know the least thing about ourselves, is it not great folly and presumption that we climb up with our thoughts (in the devil's name) and with our reason actually want to grasp God in fine majesty and speculate what he is? But why don't we do this to ourselves first and ask, where our ears, eyes and other limbs remain with their effect when we sleep? There one could dispute and speculate without driving." Further: ¹²⁸¹⁾ "We [Christians] feel well that such doctrine [that God is man and in the one Godhead three different persons] will not nor can enter into reason; we do not need a high Jewish

1280) Sermon on Trinity Sunday, [St. L. XIII, 664 ff.](#)

1281) The Three Symbola, [St. L. X, 1007. 1018.](#)

reason to show us such; we believe such knowingly and willingly. We also confess and experience that where the Holy Spirit does not shine into the heart through reason, it is not possible to grasp or believe such an article and to remain with it, but there must remain a Jewish, arrogant reason, which mocks and ridicules such an article and thus sets itself up as judge and master over the divine being, which it has never seen nor can see, nor does it know what it judges or what it writes or says about; For God 'dwells in a light where no one can approach', 1 Tim. 6:16, but must come to us, yet hidden in the lanterns', and, as Jn. 1:18 stands: 'No man hath seen God at any time; the Son in the Father's heart hath revealed it unto us; and Moses saith before, Ex. 33:20: 'No man can see me, neither live'. ... We are too coarse fellows, who in such high things more and higher esteem our blind and poor reason than the Scriptures show us. For the Scriptures are God's testimony of Himself, and reason can know nothing of divine essence, and yet will judge of that which it does not know. That is right, to judge the blind by the color."

Following this, we would like to point out some accusations or rather denigrations with which the Unitarianism of our time tries to discredit the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. First of all, there is the assertion that the Trinity doctrine of the early church is an "artificial theory" invented by the theologians of the early church, a human or "philosophical" speculation. So quite recently again Hörst Stephan.¹²⁸²⁾ Before him, Ritschl even dared to claim that "ecclesiastical-political reasons kept him [Luther] as well as his successors to the reproduction, as unchanged as possible, of the doctrine of Christ's person and of the Trinity."¹²⁸³⁾ Such wild addresses, which virtually turn historical truth on its head, are effective because of the audacity with which they are uttered. The historical truth is this, that the old dogmatists not merely reject in principle or in theory any philosophical construction of the Trinity, and therefore reject Melancthon's attempted construction as *somnium Philippi* [Philip's dream], but demonstrably actually took everything they said about the

1282) *Glaubenslehre* 1921, p. 193.

1283) [Die christl. Lehre von der Rechtf. u. Versöhnung 3 II, 18.](#)

"intra-Trinitarian" relationship in God from God's self-revelation in Scripture. The dogmatists can say with Luther:¹²⁸⁴⁾ "That we recognize and believe such one God, how he is three different persons within his Godhead, they should look at the Scriptures with us. For we have not invented it of ourselves, nor could we invent it, if Scripture did not move us to do so." Taking the Scriptural evidence for the Deity of Christ and the Trinity from both the New and Old Testaments, Luther adds:¹²⁸⁵⁾ "Make a hole through it, whoever can; I cannot." We have also already demonstrated above that what Luther and the dogmatists teach of the Holy Trinity is not "philosophy" and "artificial theory," but the clear doctrine of Scripture. The modern critics of Luther and the dogmatists would also recognize the "orthodox" doctrine of the Trinity as the doctrine of Scripture, if they could again take Scripture for the Word of God and really go to Scripture with Luther and the dogmatists.

Another claim from the Unitarian side is that the orthodox doctrines burden the human spirit with "dead formulas" and are downright obstructive to Christian piety. It is enough to understand the Son of God as the "revealer" of divine love. On the other hand, it must be said that precisely that which is taught Unitarianly of Christ as the Revealer of divine love remains as a "dead formula" in the human mind and is completely "worthless" "religiously and dogmatically". However, the Son is the Revealer of divine love against sinful humanity. But he is this revealer in his *satisfactio vicaria*, as the Lamb of God who bears the sin of the world, as the Son of God who became man in the fullness of time and placed himself under the duty and rebuke of divine law in the place of man.¹²⁸⁶⁾ This Son of God the Holy Spirit transfigures in the hearts of men until the Last Day, so that they believe it through the action of the Holy Spirit.¹²⁸⁷⁾ On the other hand, what the Unitarians say about God's love without Christ's *satisfactio* is a falsehood, and the Holy Spirit, because He is the Spirit of truth, does not indulge in the transfiguration and confirmation of falsehoods. Therefore

1284) The Three Symbols," [St. L. X, 1017](#).

1285) Sermon on the Sunday of Trinity [X, 669](#).

1286) Jn. 1:29; Gal. 4:4-5; 3:13. 1287) Jn. 16:14.

all pious-sounding Unitarian addresses of the "fatherhood of God" remain in the realm of human imagination and self-deception when the essential deity of Christ and his vicarious satisfaction are denied. They are also experienced as "dead formulas" as soon as the forcibly repressed realization of personal sinfulness and damnability asserts itself in contestation and mortal need. Horace Bushnell, Ritschl, William Harper and others also provide historical evidence of this in our time.¹²⁸⁸⁾ We would like to refer again to a remark in Karl Hase's *Hutterus Redivivus*. The rationalist Klein had said in his dogmatics¹²⁸⁹⁾ against the old church doctrine of the Trinity, among other things, that the church formulas were nothing but "empty words" in which one could not think of anything certain. Nor is it possible to see "what influence belief in this mystery could have on our happiness and virtue". Hase answers him:¹²⁹⁰⁾ "For a bliss that dwells only on earth, and for a virtue that, according to Kantian religion, needs a God only to reward its poor deeds, the dogma [of the Trinity] certainly has no meaning. But for a bliss that can exist as bliss only in peace with God, and for a virtue that feels so poor in its most sublime works that it calms itself only in faith in a redemption and sanctification, faith in a redeeming and sanctifying God has such significance that without it true virtue and bliss are not possible at all."

Finally, it has been objected in ancient and more recent times against the "orthodox" doctrine of the Trinity that in practice it leads "necessarily to tritheism". If three distinct persons were assumed in the one God, then the worship of God (the *cultus divinus*) would be divided among Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and thus the unity of the *cultus divinus* would be lost.

1288) Cf. [vol. II, p. 442 f.](#)

1289) Presentation of the Dogmatic System of the Protestant Church. System d. ev.-protest. Church together with historical and critical remarks. Remarks. Jena 1822, p. 197 f.

1290) [Hutterus Redivivus 10, p. 181](#). Hare is known to be a rationalist himself. He personally believed neither the essential deity of Christ nor the essence trinity. But he was annoyed — he was an "aesthetic rationalist" — by the shallowness with which the vulgar rationalists and the "new church" dogmatists criticized the old church doctrine. Therefore, in his *Hutterus Redivivus*, he takes Hutter's point of view (which he admittedly does not always succeed in doing) and from here turns against rationalism.

In response to this, it should first be said that the Holy Scriptures teach and require the worship of the one God in three persons. Christian baptism is to be in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Scripture further requires that all honor the Son as they honor the Father, adding, "He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.", Jn. 5:23 Therefore, the early church dictum is scriptural: *Trium personarum est unus cultus divinus*. ["The divine worship is one of three persons"] But Scripture also gives us more detail on this point. There can therefore be no question of a "division" of worship, because in each person there is not, say, only a third of the Godhead, but the whole divine majesty, in the Son by the eternal birth, in the Holy Spirit by the eternal breathing or going forth from the Father and from the Son; or as Luther expresses it, as we have already heard, *Quaelibet persona totus est Deus*. ["Each person is God as a whole."] ¹²⁹¹⁾ In the Son is $\pi\alpha\nu \tau\omicron \pi\lambda\acute{\eta}\rho\omega\mu\alpha \tau\acute{\eta}\varsigma \theta\epsilon\acute{o}\tau\eta\tau\omicron\varsigma$ and the Holy Spirit $\acute{o} \theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$. ¹²⁹²⁾ Hare remarks against Klein: "All the arts of recent exegesis have not been sufficient to erase from the New Testament the traces of the deity of Christ, which may well be interpreted away from individual passages, but in its totality stands indelibly." Further, "He who calls upon God as Father honors at the same time the Son and the Holy Spirit; for God the Father is Father to us men only through the vicarious satisfaction of the Son and through the revelation of the Holy Spirit. He who honors the Son thereby honors both the Father who sent Him, John 5:23, and the Holy Spirit who transfigures the Son in the hearts of men, John 16:14. He who worships the Holy Spirit thereby worships both the Father and the Son; for the Holy Spirit is the Spirit both of the Father (Matt. 10:20: $\tau\omicron \nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha \tau\omicron\upsilon \pi\alpha\tau\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$) and of the Son (Gal. 4:6: $\tau\omicron \nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha \tau\omicron\upsilon \upsilon\acute{\iota}\omicron\upsilon$).

8. The church terminology in the service of the Christian knowledge of God. [^]

We saw that the Christian knowledge of God has this content: The true God is only one, but this one true God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We also saw that this knowledge of God alone, which does not come from God's revelation in the realm of nature, but only from God's revelation in His

1291) Opp. V. a. IV, 474; [St. L. X, 178.](#) 1292) Col. 2:9; Acts 5:4.

Word, from the Holy Scriptures, is knowledge of salvation for us humans who have become sinful. For not only does the Scripture teach that the one eternal God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but the Scripture also adds the revelation that the Son of God became man in time in order to reconcile the whole human world to God through His intercession for mankind in His life and suffering. We also saw that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to proclaim and appropriate to men the salvation acquired from the Son of God in the Gospel. We also find that the Nicene-Constantinopolitanum includes in the confession of the Trinity also the confession of the saving work of the Son and the Holy Spirit. It does not merely say: Πιστενομεν εις ενα Θεόν, πατέρα παντοκράτορα. — Και εις ενα κύριον Ἰησονν Χριστόν. — Και εις τό πνεύμα τό άγιον. ["I believe in one God, the Father Almighty; and in one Lord Jesus Christ; and I believe in the Holy Ghost,"] — but with the faith in the consubstantial Son (όμοούσιον τῷ πατρί)) is bound the faith in τόν δ ήμας κατελδόντα και σαρκωθέντα και ένανδρωπήσαντα, παθόντα, and binding with faith in the Holy Spirit is faith in the saving work of the Holy Spirit, εις τό πνεύμα τό άγιον, τό κύριον, τό ζωοποιόν — τό λαλήσαν διά τών προφητών. Likewise we find it in Luther. After saying that the Holy Scriptures alone reveal to us the eternal triune God, the "inward being" of God, he continues: ¹²⁹³⁾ "Such revelation follows and breaks forth precisely from the supreme work of God, which is an indication of His divine counsel and will, which He decreed from eternity and according to the same also proclaimed in the promises, that His Son should become man and die, to reconcile the human generation to God, because we could not be saved from our horrible fall into sin and eternal death by any other means than by an eternal person who would have power over sin and death to erase them and give righteousness and eternal life instead; this could be neither angel nor creature, but had to be God Himself." In other words, the purpose of the revelation of the Holy Trinity in Scriptures is not a theoretical one, but an eminently practical one. The purpose is not to provide the human mind with material for human speculation as to how it is possible for the one God to be Father, Son, and

1293) [St. L. XII, 632](#).

Holy Spirit. The purpose is rather to convey to us men the knowledge that the eternal triune God has from eternity been intent on the deliverer (σωτηρία) of mankind that has become sinful.¹²⁹⁴⁾ But this self-revelation of God now also includes the revelation that the whole of mankind and each individual member of it must completely despair of all self-help and self-wisdom in regard to the attainment of salvation. And from here we understand the difficult struggle which the Christian Church has had to wage for the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, from the very beginning to the present time. All men, by their natural nature, are self-righteous and self-smart, and in the interest of human self-help and human self-smartness, the Christian doctrine of the Trinity has been fought with great earnestness by all those who would not desist from their self-righteousness and self-smartness. Above all, the purpose of the enemies of the Christian church has been to deny the essential divinity of the Son of God, and thus to put out of the way the only Mediator between God and men, who gave himself for all for redemption (ἀντίλντρον). For it stands according to Scripture, as Luther puts it:¹²⁹⁵⁾ Such words, that the Son of God gave Himself for me, "are loud thunderbolts and fire from heaven against the righteousness of the law and the doctrine of works. So great wickedness, so great error, darkness and ignorance was in my will and mind that I could only be delivered by such an unspeakably great ransom. What then do we boast that our reason guides us rightly, that our natural powers are unharmed, that our reason is inclined to the best, that everyone must do as much as is in him..... while here I hear that there is so much evil in my nature that the world and all creation has not been sufficient to propitiate God, but God's Son Himself had to be offered for it?" On the other hand, however, the Christians also recognized the seriousness of the situation in the attacks on the essential divinity of the Son of God. They recognized that with the deity of Christ they would give up the God-man reconciling work of Christ and thus the object of saving faith. And God raised up men in his church, through whose

1294) Rom. 16:25 ff. 1295) On Gal. 2:20. [St. L. IX, 236 f.](#)

public witness the Church was preserved in her faith in the deity of Christ and in the deity of the Holy Spirit (Nicea 325, Constantinople 381). The struggle of the Christian Church in our time is no less serious and difficult. Modern theology, it must be clearly recognized, in the interest of human self-righteousness (moral religion) and in the interest of self-wisdom (knowing conception and communication of the Christian religion), has renounced the Word of God as God's infallible Word, the Son of God's *satisfactio vicaria*, and the Trinitarian doctrine of Scripture. If we thus look at the hostility that the world outside and inside the Church has shown and still shows to the doctrine of the Trinity, it seems to be a miracle of divine grace that the Christian doctrine of the Trinity and thus the Christian knowledge of God and thus the Christian Church itself have not completely disappeared from the world. Therefore, we heard Luther say,¹²⁹⁶⁾ he thanks his God who has done him the grace to believe the article of the Holy Trinity on the basis of the revelation in the Scriptures simple-mindedly. And in the same context, "We see in the Histories that God has held with power over it [the article of the Holy Trinity]." Even Augusti, who laboriously sought to steer his ship through the fog of rationalism, remarks already in the first edition of his Dogmatics (1809):¹²⁹⁷⁾ "History acquaints us partly with absolute opponents, partly with manifold attempts at explanation and modification. But it is a strange phenomenon that from the origin of Christianity to our times neither the enemies nor the modifiers, however certain they usually believed to be of their cause, have ever been able to displace this doctrine. Nor has the belief in the triune God ever been shown to be a harmful error, but rather has always proved to be a doctrine equally wholesome in theory and practice. These facts speak for it with better success than it can be harmed by all the declamations of its opponents about its incomprehensibility."

As for the necessity (*necessitas*) of the church termini, there is no absolute necessity to be ascribed to them. A detailed compilation of the church expressions

1296) [St. L. XIII, 675](#). 1297) [System der christl. Dogmatik, p. 128](#).

used by the ancient church until the sixth century against the false teachers who denied the divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit and thus the Trinity, we have in the so-called Athanasian Creed.¹²⁹⁸⁾ But many Christians had and have the right belief of the Holy Trinity without being acquainted with the Athanasian Creed. They had and have the right Christian faith on the basis of the clear scriptural statements about the triune God. But if we examine those church expressions for their content, it turns out that they are a short summary (Luther: "Summarienwort") of what the Scripture *sole clarius* teaches about the Trinity. It should also be added that it does not harm Christians at all if they acquaint themselves with the church expressions not only above, but exactly. Therefore we have also (according to the procedure of the older church) included in our St. Louis hymnal not only the Apostolic, but also the Nicene and the Athanasian. As for Luther, he had no hesitation in including most of the church *termini* in his sermons to the people. With regard to the Athanasian Creed in particular, which modern Unitarianism virtually perhorresces, Luther says:¹²⁹⁹⁾ "I do not know if the New Testament Church has a more important writing after the time of the apostles." He quotes the Athanasian Creed in his sermons and proves the content of the same to be founded in Scripture.¹³⁰⁰⁾ — Among the ecclesiastical *termini* which the Church has placed at the service of the Christian knowledge of God are the following:

1. Trinitas, Trinity, Trinitarian. The word "*trinitas*" does not occur in Scripture itself, but¹³⁰¹⁾ expresses in summary what God says of Himself in His Word, namely, that He is only one (ὁνδεις θεός εἰ μὴ εις, 1 Cor. 8:4, *unus Deus*) and yet is Father and Son and Holy Spirit (βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τὸν πατέρα καὶ τοῦ υἱὸν καὶ τὸν ἅγιον πνεῦμα, Matt. 28:19, *Deus est Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus*). Augustana, art. 1: " First of all,

1298) On the Athanasianum and the ecumenical symbols in general, see Bente, [Historical Introduction to the Symbolical Books](#), p. 9 sqq. First part of *Concordia Triglotta*. St. Louis, Mo. 1921 [see [BookOfConcord here](#)].

1299) To Joel 3:1, 2. [St. L. VI, 1576](#). 1300) e.g. [X, 1007](#).

1301) The first use of the word is usually attributed to Tertullian. Cf. Zöckler, *Handbuch der theol. Wissenschaften* III, 88.

it is a unified doctrine, taught and held according to the *Concilii Nicaeni*, that there is one divine being, which is called and is God, and yet there are three persons in the same unified divine being, equally powerful, equally eternal, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, all three one divine being, eternal, without matters, without end, of immeasurable power, wisdom, and goodness, one Creator and Sustainer of all things visible and invisible." More recent theologians have also referred to Luther in their rejection of the church's doctrine of the Trinity. But this is as gross an abuse of Luther's reputation as if the same theologians also invoked Luther for their denial of verbal inspiration. To be sure, Luther says that neither the Latin word *trinitas* nor even the German "Dreifaltigkeit" "precious laute" [adequate terms]. But he immediately adds how he means it, namely that, like the human mind, human language is too poor to adequately grasp and express the high article of the Trinity. Luther further adds that these words express the Christian knowledge of God as well as it can be expressed at all. His words are:¹³⁰²⁾ "It is not a precious German, nor is it fine, to call God by the word 'Trinity', just as the Latin '*trinitas*' is not precious, but because there is no better way, we must speak as we can. For, as I have said, this article is high above human understanding and speech, that God, as a Father, must give credit to his children that we stammer and slur as best we can, if only faith is pure and right. For so much is meant by this word, that it is to be believed that the divine majesty is three distinct persons, of one true essence. For this is the revelation and knowledge of God to Christians."

2. *Persona*, person, πρόσωπον, ὑπόστασις. The word "Person" was and is used by the Christian Church to reject the erroneous notion of the old and newer Unitarians as if Father, Son, Holy Spirit were only three modes of revelation or three modes of operation or three powers or three attributes in God. Positively, we want to state with the word "person" that in the one God there are three "I" or "selves". Luther remarks on the expression "person":¹³⁰³⁾ "You may call such

1302) [St. L. XII, 628 f.](#) 1303) [St. L. XIII, 669](#).

things as you like; we call it a special Person. Although it is not addressed enough, but more stammered. But we cannot do it to him, we have no better word." Luther also points out what the Christian church wants to reject with the word Person. He says:¹³⁰⁴⁾ "We believe in one united God, and yet confess that the same united God is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Not as the heretics have fooled, as if such three names [Father, Son, Holy Spirit] should signify only one person, so according to time differently and but differently revealed." In this way the Unitarians of our time are also truly "fooling", who make three potencies, effects, powers, etc. out of the three persons. The description which the Augsburg Confession (Art. I) gives of "person" is perfectly sufficient: "And by the word *persona* is understood not a matter, not a quality in another, but that which itself exists (Latin: *quod proprie subsistit*), as the Fathers used this word in this matter." Other expressions of the dogmatists for person are: *suppositum intelligens*, *substantia individua intelligens incommunicabile*, etc. Now it is true that it is asserted by more recent theologians that the term "person" has changed in the course of time. Seeberg is particularly emphatic in asserting this:¹³⁰⁵⁾ "Person once — among the church fathers — denoted the individual being; now the word means the spiritual essence of the individual being." Even Ihmels says,¹³⁰⁶⁾ "that the term person, if it is to be applied to the intra-Trinitarian life of God, must not be understood in the sense of an individual personality." But the term person to designate the "intra-Trinitarian" or "inward being" of God has not changed over time and will never change because God and His Word do not change. The names Father and Son and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19) are designations of persons. Everyone who hears these names, we said above, does not think of three manifestations or effects or wills or powers etc., but of three persons or "I". Furthermore, when the Scripture says of both the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit that they "know," "will," "teach," "rebuke," "speak," etc., these are again designations of persons, because

 1304) [St. L. XIII, 674.](#) 1305) [Basic Truths 5, p. 115.](#)

1306) [Central Questions 2, p. 184.](#) Cf. [Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 492 ff.](#)

everyone admits: *Actiones semper sunt personarum*. What has changed in the course of time is not the concept of "person", but the concept of "theology". In our time there are "theologians" who have fallen into the very strange idea of wanting to know God not from His Word, but from the ego of the theologizing subject. According to this theological method, they transform "Father", "Son" and "Holy Spirit" into three powers, effects, wills, etc. As Seeberg says:¹³⁰⁷⁾ "This eternal energy of love [of God] filled the human soul of Jesus so that it became its content. This is the deity of Christ." And even with this, nothing has actually changed. We find the same reinterpretation of Father, Son and Spirit already in the dynamistic monarchians of the third century. Thus, by God's grace, the Christian Church of our time will also stick to the concept of Person that the Holy Scriptures teach so clearly. As Luther, after describing the struggle of the false teachers against the Holy Trinity, concludes with these words:¹³⁰⁸⁾ "So this article of the Holy Trinity has been preserved first with Scripture, then with the camps of the apostles and holy fathers, and lastly also with miraculous works against the devil and the world, and shall, if God wills, still be preserved, that we believe in one God, who is called God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit."

But however resolutely, according to the procedure of the ancient Church, Luther and the dogmatists hold to the expression "person" because they know of no better expression, they do not fail to point out that in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity this expression is at the same time used in a quite unique sense. When we address three human persons, each person has its particular nature, will, and works. Three human persons have three beings, three wills and three separate activities. It is not so with the three persons in the divine majesty. The three persons in God have one and the same divine essence according to number, one and the same divine attributes (*attributa divina*, *mie omnipotentia*, etc.) according to number, one and the same divine works *opera ad extra*) according to number, as we have already proved from Scripture. (p. 462 ff.) Three men have one being according to the kind (*secundum speciem*);

1307) *Grundwahrheiten*, op. cit.

1308) *St. L. XIII*, 679.

the three persons in God have one essence according to the number (*secundum numerum, eandem numero essentiam* ["according to the number, the essence of the same number"]). Therefore, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity: *Deus verissime unus et tamen tres personae verissime (non tantum notionaliter, sed realiter) distinctae* ["God is very truly one and yet three persons very truly (not only conceptually, but really) distinct"] is a mystery quite unfathomable to human reason. Therefore we cannot explain to human reason how the Son of God alone could become man without the Father and the Holy Spirit becoming man at the same time. The fact stands firm from Scripture (Jn. 1:14; Gal. 4:4; Col. 2:9), but as far as the comprehensibility of this fact is concerned, Luther declares that he would want to be as wise as any heretic if he could comprehend it.¹³⁰⁹ Chemnitz writes of the unique use of the word "person" in the Scriptural doctrine of the Holy Trinity:¹³¹⁰ *Vocabulum προστάσεως vel personae aliter usurpatur in ecclesia quam in vulgari consuetudine loquendi. In hominibus quid sit persona, scimus; quid sit in angelis, intelligimus. Petrus, Paulus, Iohannes sunt tres personae, quibus communis est una natura humana, sed differunt valde multum: 1. substantia, quia totus a toto distinctus est; 2. tempore, ut Iohannes est iunior Peter; 3. voluntate, ut Paulus contradicit Peter, Gal. 2:11; 4. potentia; sic Paulus prae caeteris laboravit, 1 Cor. 15:10; 5. operatione, ut Peter in circumcisione, Paulus in gentibus, Gal. 2:8. In Trinitate vero non ita distinguuntur personae, sicut angelus ab angelo, homo ab homine, inquit Cyrillus, ubi totus Petrus a toto Paulo localiter distinctus est; sed Ioh. 14:10 Christus inquit: [Google] "Ego in Patre et Pater in me est." Item in creaturis non sequitur: ubi una persona est, ibi etiam esse reliquas propter naturam communem; quia unus angelus est in Persia, alter in Graecia, Dan. 10:13; Filius vero dicit: "Pater non relinquit me solum, sed mecum est," Ioh. 8:29. Item in hominibus et angelis, ut dictum est, differunt personae tempore, voluntate, potentia, operatione; sed in personis Trinitatis est coaeternitas, una voluntas, una potentia, una operatio. Haec sunt Nazianzeni et Cyrilli. Et hoc discrimen necessario observandum est. Neque enim tantum est mysterium, ad quod etiam angeli obstupescunt, si ita esset una essentia, tres personae, sicut Michael, Gabriel, Raphael sunt tres personae, quibus unica angelica natura communis est et ex aequo convenit. Ex his fundamentis sumpta*

 1309) [St. L. VII, 2161](#). 1310) *Loci*, p. 30 sq.

est vulgaris regula: [Google] Personae Divinitatis non essentialiter differunt, ut in creaturis, ubi una quaevis suum proprium esse habet; nec tantum est ibi distinctio rationis, ut voluit Sabellius, sed realiter distinguuntur, modo tamen nobis incomprehensibili et incognito.... Quodsi quis cavillari voluerit, vocabula essentiae et personae non esse satis propria ad designandum arcanum illud mysterium Unitatis et Trinitatis, is sibi hoc responsum habeat, quod Augustinus dicit 1. 5, De Trin.: "Magna prorsus inopia humanum laborat eloquium. Dictum est tamen tres personae, non ut illud diceretur, sed ne taceretur omnino." [Google]

3. *Essentia, οὐσία, φύσις*, essence. We understand by "essence" in the doctrine of the Trinity the one, that is, only once existing divine essence (*eadem numero essentia*), which belongs wholly and undividedly to each of the three persons of the divine majesty. Therefore, as the word "person," so also the word "essence," is used in a unique sense in the doctrine of the Trinity. For example, when we say of three men that they have one being, that which really (*in concreto*) exists is threefold or in three copies. The one being in three human persons is a mere thought thing, an abstractum, a *nomen universale*. On the other hand, the one divine essence of the three persons in God is a concreteness, something really existent, because it exists only once and belongs entirely and undividedly to each of the persons of the divine majesty or is the whole God himself. This is what our ancient teachers thoroughly hold on the basis of Scripture. Thus Chemnitz:¹³¹¹⁾ *Essentia hominum est aliquid communicabile, sed est nomen universale, quod per se revera non existit, sed cognitione tantum colligitur et intellectu comprehenditur. Essentia vero in divinis non imaginarium quiddam est, ut genus vel species, sed revera existit, quamvis est communicabilis. Augustinus eleganter hoc expressit. "Essentia," inquit, "praedicatur de Patre, Filio et Spiritu Sancto non ut genus de speciebus, nec ut species de individuis, nec ut totum de partibus, sed alio quodam ineffabili et incomprehensibili modo." In toto enim hoc articulo illa regula Augustini diligenter est observanda: "Si non potes invenire, quid sit Deus, tamen caveas de eo sentire, quod non est." Intelligit ergo ecclesia nomine essentiae non nomen universale, ut philosophi*

1311) *Loci* I, p. 38 sq.

nominant essentiam humanam, sed naturam divinam revera existentem, quae communicabitur est et communis tribus personis, Patri, Filio et Spiritui Sancto, et est tota in singulis. Et haec tantum nominis definitio est, inquit Nazianzenus. Quid autem sit, quoad definitionem rei, hoc nesciri dico, nisi quod attributa in definitione Dei posita dicimus esse ipsam Dei essentiam. [[Google](#)]¹³¹²⁾ That the numerical unity of the divine essence must be held with the *tres realiter distinctae personae*, Luther takes thus: ¹³¹³⁾ Man, born of another, becomes not only a special person of his own from his Father, but also a special being of his own, and does not remain in his Father's being, nor the Father in his Son's being. But here [in the divine majesty] the Son is born in another person, and yet remains in his Father's being, and the Father in the Son's being; thus separating according to persons, but remaining in one unseparated and undivided being. So when one man goes out from another and is sent, not only do the persons separate, but also the essence, and one comes far from the other. But here the Holy Spirit goes out from the Father and the Son, just as he is sent from the Father and the Son, and separates into another person, but still remains in the essence of the Father and the Son, and the Father and the Son in the essence of the Holy Spirit, that is, all three persons in one eternal Godhead. That is why the theologians call such a birth an inward birth, which does not fall out of the Godhead, but comes from the Father alone and remains in the Godhead. Thus, the Holy Spirit's procession is called an immanent procession, which does not come from the Godhead, but only from the Father and the Son, and remains in the Godhead. How this comes about we are to believe; for it is not known even to the angels, who nevertheless see it with joy without cessation: and all who would have understood it have broken their necks over it."¹³¹⁴⁾

1312) Likewise Gerhard: *Loci, L. De Nat. Dei, § 49: Essentia hominum est nomen universale, quod per se revera non existit, sed cogitatione tantum colligitur et intellectu comprehenditur. Essentia vero in divinis non est quiddam imaginarium, ut genus vel species, sed revera existit, quamvis sit communicabilis.* [[Google](#)]

1313) St. L. X, 1008 f.

1314) As is well known, proceedings were necessary between the Greek and Latin Churches in order to reach an agreement on the expressions "essence" and "person".

4. Ὁμοούσιος τῷ πατρί, *Patri coessentialis* or *consubstantialis*, of one being with the Father. This term of the Council of Nicea (325) expresses, against Arianism, which called the Son of God the first creature (κτίσμα ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων), the scriptural truth that the Son is of one being — and *unius numero essentiae* — with the Father. It should be recalled once again how firmly Luther emphasizes that the Council of Nicaea with the ὁμοούσιος taught nothing new, but rather

to reach an understanding. [Baier \(II, 57\)](#) summarizes the course and result of the proceedings thus: *Quamvis Graeci et Latini aliquamdiu inter se contenderent, atque illi quidem putaverint, nomine personae apud Latinos designari officium aut habitum externum [persona in Latin is first of all the mask, the role played by the actor, the rank, etc.] ac propterea tres personas non importare aut exprimere realem distinctionem Patris, Filii et Spiritus Sancti, Latini vero putarent ὑπόστασιν denotare in casu recto ipsam essentiam, ut, admissis tribus ὑποστάσεσι, statuendae sint tres essentiae: postea tamen, cum se invicem rectius intellexissent, factum est, ut Graeci dicerent τρία πρόσωπα et Latini tres hypostases.* [\[Google\]](#) [Augustine](#) points (De Trin. VII, 4) to the different use of language: *Aliter Graeci accipiunt substantiam quam Latini.* [Chemnitz](#) notes (Loc. 1, 38): *Rixae ortae sunt de vocabulo ὑποστάσεως inter Graecos et Latinos.*, and then praises the compliance of the Greeks: *Graeci propter concordiam cesserunt Latinis et coeperunt ipsi quoque dicere τρία πρόσωπα, quod vocabulum personae esset antiquius.* [\[Google\]](#) In support of his judgment, Chemnitz refers to Gregory of Nazianzus Orat. 31 in *Laudem Athanasii*, where Gregory says: *Graeci confitentur unam ουσίαν et tres ὑποστάσεις. Itali, ob linguae angustiam et nominum inopiam, substantiam non possunt distinguere ab essentia, ac ideo Personas nominant. Athanasius hoc intelligens, utramque partem convocavit, et cum videret eos in rebus idem sentire, suasor et auctor fuit, ut propter concordiam in modis loquendi etiam convenirent.* [\[Google\]](#) Chemnitz' dogma-historical treatise on the use of the expressions "essence" and "person" deserves attention even today. Also noteworthy is Chemnitz's counsel to refrain from proving that ουσία, πρόσωπον, and ὑπόστασις occur in Scripture in the same sense in which they were used by the Church in the struggle against the false teachers. He calls them *peregrina vocabula*, but justifies their use by pointing out a duality: 1. *quamvis haec vocabula in Scriptura non inveniuntur in tali significatione, tamen res ipsas, quas ecclesia his vocabulis intelligit et significat, in Scriptura expresse esse positas et patefactas*; 2. *ecclesiam non aliqua petulanti novitatis studio discessisse a simplici proprietate verborum Scripturae, sed, ut eleganter et vere inquit Augustinus, loquendi necessitate a Graecis et Latinis parta esse haec vocabula propter errores et insidias haereticorum.* [\[Google\]](#) Chemnitz, like Luther, refers to Athanasius' disputation with Arius before the pagan judge Probus. (L.c., p. 37.)

only confessed the doctrines of Scripture to Arius' error.¹³¹⁵⁾ "Homousius" — says Luther op. cit., 2211 — "means one and the same essence or nature, or one and not two, as the Fathers had put in the Concilio and is sung in Latin: *consubstantialis*, some called *coexistentialis*, *coessentialis* afterwards." Also it stands certain that Athanasius understood homousia from the numerical unity of the essence, because he rejects any division of the divine essence and says positively:¹³¹⁶⁾ Ἐν εἶσιν αὐτός [the Son] καὶ ὁ πατήρ τῇ ἰδιότητι καὶ οἰκειότητι τῆς φύσεως καὶ τῇ παντότητι τῆς μίας θεότητος.

The cause of the Arian quarrel Gieseler¹³¹⁷⁾ amazingly finds in Arius' "historical-exegetical education" in the school of the Antiochian Lucianus, while Luther judges very correctly: ¹³¹⁸⁾ "In such beautifully peaceful paradise and happy time [the persecution of Christians on the part of the heathen had ceased] the old serpent comes and awakens Arius, a priest at Alexandria, against his bishop and wanted to raise something new against the old faith and also be a man. Arius, who was a bishop, accepted his bishop's doctrine that Christ was not God, and too many priests and great learned bishops fell to him, and misfortune increased greatly in many lands, until Arius was allowed to boast that he was a martyr and had to suffer for the truth from his bishop Alexandro, who did not allow him to do so well, writing shameful letters to all the countries against him." We call Gieseler's judgment on the origin of Arianism "strange" because it has never happened and can never happen that someone denies the deity of Christ or the Trinity or the *satisfactio vicaria* or the inspiration of Scripture, etc., as a result of "exegetical education." In this way, of course, modern theology would like to justify its denial of all the basic articles of the Christian religion. It is very familiar with the talk that it came to its position by way of "exegesis", "deeper understanding of the Scriptures", and so on.

 1315) [St. L. XVI, 2188 f.](#): "The Council did not reinvent or establish this article as if it had not existed before in the Church, but defended it against the new heresy of Arius. ... For where would have remained the Christians, who before this *Council* had believed for more than three hundred years, from the apostles onward, and had worshipped and called upon the dear Lord Jesus as a true God, and had died for it and allowed themselves to be miserably tortured?"

1316) *Contra Arianos* III, 4. in Seeberg, [Dogmengesch.](#) ² I, 166.

1317) *Kirchengesch.* I, 333. 1318) [St. L. XVI, 2186.](#)

But the true "exegetical education" consists, as we know, in the fact that we "act with the Scriptures in such a way that we think as God Himself speaks" (Luther), and remain at Christ's Word in the face of all human thoughts. (Jn. 8:31-32.) The genesis of Arianism as of every other form of heterodox teaching, also of the heterodox teaching of our time, is exactly revealed in 1 Tim. 6:3 f. for all times. It is the turning away from the salutary words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the resulting typhosis, that is, the being puffed up in one's own wisdom, modernly expressed: the construction of the Christian doctrine out of the religious self-consciousness of the theologizing subject. The real reason why Luther and Melancthon would not have dared to undertake a "new construction" in the early church doctrine of the Trinity is recently given by Horst Stephan with the words:¹³¹⁹⁾ "They were far too accustomed to regard the Bible as a source of knowledge and the early Christian confessions as a summary of biblical doctrine." Stephan refers to Erl. A² 9, 33, where Luther — but not as by old habit — says: "This faith" ("that there is only one God and yet three distinct persons in one divine being, as the Holy Fathers have diligently gathered from Moses and from the writings of the prophets and apostles and have preserved it against all heretics") — this faith "has been bequeathed to us, and God has preserved it by power in His Church to this day against all the rabble and devils. Therefore we should also remain simple and not be clever".¹³²⁰⁾ As a warning, Luther adds that "our God saves those who do not want to be clever and believe the Word badly; the others, who want to follow reason in such matters and despise the Word, shall fall to the ground and perish because of their wisdom".

5 *Filioque*. This term expresses that the Holy Spirit proceeds not only from the Father, but also from the Son. The *filioque* is now generally believed to have been inserted into the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed by the Council of Toledo (589). But here, too, the church formulation is later than the faith of the Christians. Christians have always believed the *filioque* when they read or heard that the Scriptures call the Holy Spirit the Spirit of the Father (Matt. 10:20) and

1319) [Glaubenslehre 1921, p. 192.](#)

1320) [St. L., XII. 656](#)

the Spirit of the Son (Gal. 4:6) and that the mission of the Spirit is ascribed to the Father (Joh. 14:16), so also to the Son (Joh. 15:26; 16:7), with the added explanation that the Holy Spirit does not speak from Himself but takes it from the Son (Jn. 16:13-14). Furthermore, the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of the lips of the Messiah (Is. 11:4), the Spirit of His mouth (2 Thess. 2:8). The words Jn. 20:22 also point to the going forth of the Holy Spirit from the Son: Ταῦτα εἰπὼν ἐνεφύσησε καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον. As is well known, the *filioque* later became the point of difference between the Oriental [Eastern] and Occidental [Western] Churches. *Conf. Orthod.* (1643), p. 142: Το πνεῦμα το ἅγιον ἐκπορεύεται ἐκ μόνου τοῦ πατρὸς ὡς πηγῆς καὶ ἀρχῆς τῆς θεότητος.¹³²¹⁾

6. Περιχώρησις, ἐνύπαρξις, *circumincessio*. By these expressions the interpenetration of the divine persons is expressed, because to each of the three persons the numerically one divine essence belongs wholly and undividedly. It is the *immanentia et inexistencia mutua, qua una persona propter essentiae unitatem est in alia*. ["mutual immanence and non-existence, whereby one person is in another because of the unity of essence"]¹³²²⁾ This doctrine

1321) In Plitt, Grundriß der Symbolik 3, p. 40. Cf. on more recent deniers of the *filioque* M. Günther, *Populäre Symbolik* 4, *St. Louis* 1913, p. 131 f. That the *filioque* was also taught in public writings before the Council of Toledo (589) is generally admitted. *Augustine* taught the origin of the Holy Spirit from the Father and Son. (Seeberg, *Dogmengesch.*² 1, 195.) The same is stated in the Athanasian Creed: "The Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son, not made, not created, not born, but proceeding." Dogmatists prove that according to Scripture the Holy Spirit stands in the same relationship to the Son as to the Father. Thus *Baier II, 69*: *Spiritus Sanctus non tantum Patris, Matt. 10:20, sed et Filii Spiritus dicitur, Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:9; 1 Pet. 1:11, Dicitur enim Spiritus eius personae, a qua spiratur*. ["The Holy Spirit not only the Father, Matt. 10:20, but it is also said of the Son of the Spirit, Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:9; 1 Pet. 1:11, for it is called the Spirit of his person, from whom he breathes"] Baier then still refers to Jn. 20:22, Is. 11:4, compare with 2 Thess. 2:8. This proof should also be accepted by those among the newer theologians who admit that "pretemporal" or "ontological" relationships in God must correspond to the economic divine acts. As for the *Greeks*, they would hardly have denied the *filioque* so adamantly if they had not sought a reason for separation from the Western Church.

1322) *Quenstedt* 1, 470: *Ὁμοουσίας consequentia sunt περιχώρησις seu ἐνύπαρξις, circumincessio, immanentia et inexistencia mutua et singularissima, qua una persona propter essentiae unitatem est in alia, Ioh. 14:11; 17:21. ["Ὁμοουσίας consequentia sunt περιχώρησις seu ἐνύπαρξις, circumincessio, immanentia et inexistencia mutua et singularissima, qua una persona propter essentiae unitatem est in alia, Ioh. 14:11; 17:21."]*

is clear scriptural teaching. Jn. 14:11: Ἰγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἐν ἐμοί Jn. 17:21: ὁν, πάτερ, ἐν ἐμοί κάγω ἐν σοί. With this mutual being of the persons, which is clearly testified in the Scriptures, it is to be held at the same time on the basis of the Scriptures in faith that only the Son, not also the Father and the Holy Spirit, became man. Luther, as we heard above, probably wanted to be as smart as some heretic, if he could understand this.

The *opera divina ad intra* and the *opera divina ad extra*. These terms have been said before and especially in our time to be the climax of the sophistry, incomprehensibility, and meaninglessness of early church terminology in relation to the doctrine of the Trinity. But they are not based on human sophistry, but are contained in the substance of Scripture. And as far as their intelligibility is concerned, it has already been recalled and shown above that Luther, for example, excluded these terms without hesitation from his sermons to the people. By *opera divina ad extra* we understand those works of God which relate to the world or have their object in and on the world, such as the creation and preservation of the world and the gathering and preservation of the Church. We already established from Scripture that these works are common to the three Persons, because the three Persons have not three divine beings but one and the same divine being, and not three series of divine attributes and works but one and the same divine attributes and works. Hence the early church axiom: *Opera divina ad extra sunt indivisa*. Besides this, however, the Scriptures call divine works which have their object not in the world and within the world, but within the Godhead. Luther calls them "inwardly remaining divine works" or also works that do not "fall out of the Godhead." These works are the eternal begetting (*generatio*) of the Son and the eternal breathing (*spiratio*) of the Holy Spirit. When in Scripture the Son is called "the only begotten of the Father" (ὁ μονογενὴς παρὰ πατρός), a divine work within the eternal divine majesty is thus revealed to us, which, proceeding from the Father, relates to the Son. And when Scripture calls the Holy Spirit both the "Spirit of the Father" (τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ πατρός) and the "Spirit of the Son" (τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ), it thus reveals to us a divine work within the divine majesty, which, proceeding from the Father and the Son, refers to the

Holy Spirit. Through the revelation of these "inward" divine works, the Holy Scriptures clearly reveal to us that in the one eternal divine Majesty there are three distinct divine Persons: the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit; for Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are personal names. This *opera divina ad intra* is not common to the three persons as is the *opera ad extra*. Rather, the begetting of the Son is ascribed to the Father alone, and thereby the Father and Son are revealed as distinct persons. And the breathing (*spiratio*) of the Holy Spirit is ascribed to the Father and the Son, and thereby the Holy Spirit is revealed as a distinct person from the Father and the Son. Thus, the *opera divina ad intra*, because they are *divisa* (axiom: *opera ad intra divisa sunt*), serve to distinguish three persons within the divine majesty. They are therefore also called "personal acts" (*actus personales*). In order to maintain this distinction of the persons against the Unitarian error and to reject any confusion of the persons, it was then added that to the Father as a personal quality belongs the being of the Father (*paternitas*), to the Son as a personal quality the being of the Son (*filiatio*), to the Holy Spirit as a personal quality the being of the Spirit or being breathed upon (*spiratio passiva, processio*). These are the so-called "personal properties" (*proprietates personales, characteres hypostativi*), which are given with the personal acts (*actus personales*). They have, as said, the purpose to fix the difference of the persons and to exclude the mixing of the persons. The same purpose has the further detailed descriptions of the persons in the Athanasian Creed: "The Father is of no one, neither made nor created nor born. The Son is of the Father alone, neither made nor created, but born. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and the Son, not made, not created, not born, but proceeding." These more detailed descriptions of the three persons have been called in summary *proprietates et notiones personales*.¹³²³⁾ These church expressions are especially in our

 1323) [Baier-Walther II, 64](#) [[Trigl., p. 33](#): Athanasian Creed:] *Distinguuntur personae divinae actibus personalibus, proprietatibus et notionibus personalibus*. Added is a quotation from [Löber, Ev.-Luth. Dogm., St. Louis and Leipzig 1872, p. 201 ff.](#): "The personal effects are those effects within the divine being (*opera ad intra*), by means of which a person of the most holy

time called "artificial theory", "scholastic speculation" and "without content". We read, for example, in one of the latest efforts in the dogmatic field:¹³²⁴ "To this were added the old speculations about the *opera ad intra*: the two *actus personales*, the begetting (*generatio*) proceeding from the father and the breathing (*spiratio*) proceeding from the father and son, yield the three *proprietas personales* (*paternitas, filiatio, processio*) and the similarly contentless *notiones personales*. Thus one had an exceedingly artificial theory."

To this dismissive criticism of the term *opera ad intra*, which has been used in the church against the antitrinitarians, it should first be said: One could well wish, however, that in the church there had never been any deniers of the Holy Trinity, and that therefore the church had never had cause to develop this terminology. One compares Chemnitz about this.¹³²⁵ So also the apostle Paul desires, "Would to God that they also were cut off (*ἀποκόψονται*) who disturb you!"¹³²⁶ But the assertion that this terminology, as it now exists formed "*propter errores et insidias haereticorum*"¹³²⁷, is a human "speculation," an "artificial theory," and "devoid of content," can only be called an unseemly audacity. This audacity has a parallel in the modern-theological assertion, which even in the "conservative" camp

Godhead has the divine being from another person from eternity. Such effects are two: the one, since God the Father from eternity has begotten and given birth to His Son (*generatio*), and the other, since God the Father and the Son from eternity have let the Holy Spirit go forth from Himself (*spiratio active talis*). ... On these two personal effects are based the personal attributes, namely that the first person is Father (*paternitas*), the other the Son (*filiatio*) and the third the Holy Spirit or the proceeding out (*processio seu spiratio passive talis, termino 'passive' tantum grammaticae intellecto*). ... Finally, the difference between these highly holy persons also includes their personal knowledge, from which we can see their personal characteristics; namely, in the case of the first person, that he was neither born nor came forth from another (*innascibilitas et improcessibilitas, quatenus non est ab alio vel genitus, vel procedens*); in the case of the other person, that it is born of the first person (*generatio passive talis*); but in the case of the third, that it is not born, but proceeds from the father and son (*spiratio passive in sensu grammatico talis*)."

1324) Horst Stephan, [Glaubenslehre 1921, p. 193](#).

1325) *Loci*, I, 36 sqq. 1326) Gal. 5:12.

1327) Chemnitz' expression loc. cit.

themselves do not teach that they are inspired and cannot be broken. With regard to the church terms, which have to do with the *opera divina ad intra*, it actually stands in such a way that they are fully and completely covered by scriptural statements, as we have already proved in detail above. Modern theologians may freely confess their unbelief, namely, that they do not believe the Scriptures and therefore openly reproach Luther, for example, for having been "too accustomed" to consider the Bible as the Word of God, and therefore also for having stopped at considering the church terminology of the *opera divina ad intra* as a summary of the biblical doctrines. But it should be impossible for modern theologians to claim that these terms are not founded in Scripture, but are to be classified as human speculation and invention. In fact, these church expressions say no more than Christians, who are completely unfamiliar with church terminology, have completely excluded from their content on the basis of a few clear passages of Scripture. If the Christians believe simply-mindedly that the Son is the only begotten of the Father and the Holy Spirit the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, they believe thereby both the actus personales, namely the *generatio* and *spiratio*, and the proprietaes personales, namely *paternitas*, *filiatio*, *processio*, together with the supposedly "contentless" *notiones personales*, such as the non-being born of the Father, etc. But why — so judge less determined opponents of the doctrine of the Trinity — why burden these basically self-evident things with a series of church terms? To this the proper answer is: For this we can thank the false teachers! The church has not invented these terms out of novelty addiction (Chemnitz says: *non aliqua petulanti novitatis affectione*), much less out of some kind of malice to torment the posterity. Rather, we owe this burden of ecclesiastical expressions — if it is a burden — to the enemies of the Christian church, who, under ever new misinterpretations of scriptural words and evasions, disputed God's self-revelation in his Word, namely the revelation that the divine Majesty from eternity is Father and Son and Holy Spirit. They did not want to let the Son and the Holy Spirit be persons, but to convert them in ever new twists into divine effects or wills or powers.

Because now, as is well known, modern theology to a large part walks on the same evil ways, namely by allegedly "deeper grasping" of the concept "person" the persons are converted into "effects, forces, will" etc.,¹³²⁸⁾ so what the old-church theology says about the *opera divina ad intra* is not at all without value and "without content" also for the present. The Christian' church has been fought by Unitarians at all times, even at the time of the Reformation. Even in Luther's time there were people who were under the delusion that they could still be members of the Christian Church, despite the denial of the Trinity. This explains the fact that Luther so powerfully declares the Trinity in all his writings and also in sermons to the people. In doing so, he also considered it useful to use the terminology of the early church. This is especially true of the expressions *opera*, *ad intra* and *opera ad extra*, whose complete agreement with Scripture he proves. — The question has still been raised whether we could really expect from the Christian people an understanding of what it is about the eternal begetting (*generatio*) of the Son from the Father and about the eternal proceeding (*processio*) of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son. We certainly cannot expect this. But also all understanding theologians, when they tried to penetrate into the mystery of *opera ad intra*, have confessed: *Quid sit nasci, quid processus, me nescire sum professus*. ["I professed not to know what it is to be born, what the process is."] Very correctly, for example, Baier says:¹³²⁹⁾ *Differre generationem Filii et spirationem Spiritus Sancti certum est; modum autem, quo differant, plenius definire non possumus*. In other words, between the eternal *generatio* of the Son from the Father and the eternal *spiratio* of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son, there is certainly a difference, not merely imagined, but real, because the words used in Scripture are different. But to want to make statements beyond that of the difference, also about the how of the difference, would be a reprehensible boldness and an attempt to penetrate independently, without God's self-revelation in his Word, into the divine majesty which dwells in a light where no man can come.¹³³⁰⁾ Luther also says, as we have already heard, with regard to the eternal *generatio* of the Son and with regard to the eternal *processio* of the Holy

1328) [Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 490](#) ff.

1329) [Compend. II, 69](#).

1330) 1 Tim. 6:16.

Spirit:¹³³¹) "Theologians call such a birth of the Son an inward birth, which does not fall out of the Godhead, but comes only from the Father and remains in the Godhead. So they call the coming forth of the Holy Spirit an inward coming forth, which does not go out of the Godhead, but comes only from the Father and the Son and remains in the Godhead. How this comes about we are to believe, for it is not known even to the angels, who nevertheless see it with joy without cessation, and all who want to understand it have their necks broken over it."

The throwaway criticism and heartfelt hostility that modern theology has towards the church term *opera divina ad intra* is very explainable. If there are eternal *opera ad intra* or eternal *actus personales* within the divine majesty, that is, if the Son is born of the Father in eternity, and if the Holy Spirit proceeds from eternity from the Father and from the Son, and if there are therefore also *proprietaes* and *notiones personales*, that is, the Father is not only in time, but from eternity Father, and the Son is not only in time, but from eternity Son from the essence of the Father, and the Holy Spirit is not only in time, but from eternity Holy Spirit from the essence of the Father and the Son: then Unitarianism in every form, including Subordinationism and the merely "economic" Trinity, is completely eliminated. Then it stands immovably, as the Augsburg Confession expresses it, "that there is one divine being, which is called and truly is God, and yet there are three persons in the same one divine being, equally powerful, equally eternal, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit". What a strange thing that here — just as in the case of the scriptural doctrine of inspiration — the verdict of a theology that has fallen away from Scripture is: artificial theory, human speculation, without content, harmful, etc. We consider it appropriate and useful to let Luther and Chemnitz have their say once again about the *opera ad intra* and *extra*.

In Luther's exposition of the last words of David (2 Sam. 23:1-7) we have a very detailed exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity from the Old and New Testaments.¹³³²) Throughout, Luther warns against the attempt to reason in imagined wisdom from the human ego, according to "reason," about the doctrine of the

1331) The Three Symbola, [St. L. X, 1009](#). 1332) [St. L. III, 1884 ff.](#)

Holy Trinity to want to judge. He says, for example: "Here Dame sophistry, the reason, which is ten times wiser than God Himself, is at odds." "Such kind of highly intelligent people are also the Jews, Mahomet, Turks and Tatars, who can grasp the incomprehensible nature of God in the spoon or nutshell of their reason and say that God has no wife, therefore he can have no son. Fie, fie, fie you, devil, with Jews and Mahomet, and all those who are pupils of blind, foolish, miserable reason in these high things, which no one understands but God alone, and how much of it the Holy Spirit has revealed to us through the prophets." Throughout Luther's exposition runs the use of the early church term *opera ad intra* and *opera ad extra*. He says in connected exposition (loc. cit., pp. [1919 ff.](#)): "Here it is well for a Christian to note that, as Athanasius sings in his Symbols,¹³³³ he does not mix the persons into one person or divide or separate the one divine being into three persons. For if I give a special work to any person from outside, in the creature [*ad extra*], where the other two should not have anything to do with it, I have divided the one divinity and made three gods or creators; this is wrong. Again, where I do not give a special distinction to any person within the Godhead or apart from and above the creature [thus *ad intra*], which is not due to the other two, I have mixed the persons into one person; this is also wrong. Here belongs the rule of St. Augustine: *Opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa*, the works, which God has made from within the Godhead, are not to be divided, that is, the persons are not to be divided into the works, nor is each person to be given his own different work from the outside, but the person is to be distinguished from within the Godhead [*ad intra*], and yet all three are to be given each work from within [*ad extra*] without distinction. So that I give an example: The Father is my God and your God and Creator, who made me and you. The same work that I and you are, the Son also made, is both my God and your God and Creator as the Father. So the Holy Spirit made the same work that I am and you are, and is my God and your God and Creator as well as

1333) Luther refers to the use that the Athanasian Creed was sung in the churches. Cf. Müller, Symb. Bücher, Historisch-theol. Einleitung, p.LIII..

the Father and the Son. Still there are not three gods or creators, but one single God and creator of all of us. Here, with this faith, I guard against the heresy of Arii and his kind, that I do not separate the one divine being into three gods and creators, but keep in the right Christian faith no more than the one God and creator of all creatures. — Again, if then I go above and apart from the creation or creature into the intrinsic, incomprehensible essence of divine nature [that is, *ad intra*], I find, as the Scriptures teach me (for reason is nothing here), that the Father is another distinct person from the Son, in the one, undivided, eternal Godhead; his difference [*proprietas personalis*] is that he is Father, and has the Godhead not from the Son nor from anyone; the Son is a distinct person from the Father, in the same one paternal Godhead; his distinction [*proprietas personalis*] is that he is Son, and has the Godhead not of himself nor of anyone, but of the Father alone, as eternally born of the Father; the Holy Spirit is a distinct person from the Father and the Son in the same united Godhead; his distinction [*proprietas personalis*] is that he is the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son at the same time eternally, and having the Godhead not of himself nor of anyone, but both from the Father and the Son at the same time; and all this from everlasting to everlasting.¹³³⁴⁾ Here, with this faith, I refrain from the heresy of Sabellii and his ilk, of Jews, Mahomet, and whoever they are, who are wiser than God Himself, and do not mix the persons into one single person, but keep in the right Christian faith three distinct persons in the one, divine, eternal Being, who nevertheless is all three against us and the creatures [*ad intra*] one single God, Creator and Worker of all things. — All this is perhaps sharp or subtle to us Germans and should remain fair in the schools; but because the devil stirs his tail in these latter times,¹³³⁵⁾ as if he would like to bring back all kinds of heresies,

 1334) Thus, Luther rejects the so-called "economic Trinity," which is just another name for Unitarianism.

1335) In our time, the devil does more than merely "stir the tail. As at one time during the Arian struggle it was said, "The world has become Arian," so at our time it can be said that through modern theology the so-called Protestant world has become Unitarian. Cf. in [Nitzsch-Stephan the sections "The Present" and "Criticism and Result," pp. 490 ff.](#)

and the world without this has become lascivious and mad to hear new things, and weary of sound doctrine (as St. Paul prophesies 2 Tim. 4:3), so that the doors are opened to the devil to lead in what he wills, it is useful and necessary that some, both laymen and scholars, especially pastors, preachers and schoolmasters, learn to think and speak German about such necessary articles of our faith. But if it is too difficult, let him stay with the children in catechism and pray against the devil and his heresy, against Jews and Mahomet, so that he will not be led into temptation.

Chemnitz writes in his *Loci* under the section: *De regulis in operibus Dei ad extra et ad intra* among others the following: ¹³³⁶⁾ *Traditae sunt in scholis duae regulae ex Augustino sumptae, quae si nullum alium haberent usum, tamen retinendae essent propterea, quia monstrant vera fundamenta solvendi Sabelliana argumenta. Prima: Opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa. Quando Deus extra suam essentiam in creaturis aliquid operatur, tunc tres personae sunt simul et simul operantur, quia unus est Factor et Conditor. Ideo unum etiam opus trium Personarum. Vide Martinum Lutherum de ultimis verbis Davidis, Tom. 8, Ien., p. 164, ubi dicit: [Google] "If I give a special work to each person from outside in the creatures, where the other two do not have to do with it, then I have separated the one Godhead and made three gods or creators. This is wrong. So the persons are not to be divided into the works, nor is each person to be assigned his own different work from the outside, but all three persons are to be assigned each work by heart without distinction. Sumitur autem haec regula ex illis fundamentis, quae antea posuimus. In creaturis enim ea, quae numero differunt, etiamsi in essentia convenient, facultates tamen et operationes partiuntur, inquit Nazianzenus. In Deo vero tanta est unitas, tanta vis unius et eiusdem essentiae, ut non singulis personis singula et peculiaria opera, quae seorsim in creaturis operantur, assignari debeant. Quia Scriptura inquit: "Faciamus", Gen. 1:26, et Ioan. 5:16: "Quae Pater facit, haec similiter et Filius facit"; Ioan. 14:10: "Pater in me manens, ipse facit opera"; et rursus Ioan. 5:17: "Pater meus usque modo operatur, et ego operor"; Ioan. 16:15: "Omnia, quaecunque habet Pater, mea sunt. Ideo Spiritus*

1336) *Loci* I, 40 sq.

*Sanctus de meo accipiet et annuntiabit vobis." Haec testimonia pulchre explicant, quomodo opera ad extra sint communia. Hinc Nazianzenus dicit: [Google] "Illud, quod operatur, est una tribus personis communis essentia." Ergo sicut una et indistincta est essentia, ita unus est factor et operator: unum et indistinctum opus. Secunda: Opera Trinitatis ad intra sunt divisa. Opera, quae Deus facit extra omnem creaturam intra sese, non sunt communia tribus personis, sed unius tantum personae propria, ut Patris proprium est generare; Filii, genitum esse; et Spiritus Sancti, ab utroque procedere. Quando divinitas intra se describitur, discernuntur personae, et servatur cuique personae suus ordo et sua proprietas, ut prima persona sit Pater, secunda Filius, tertia Spiritus Sanctus; item, quid sit Pater, quid Filius, quid Spiritus Sanctus; item, quod discrimen, quae proprietas. Vide rursus nostrum Lutherum de ultimis verbis Davidis, Tom. 8, Ien., p. 165, ubi sic scripsit: [Google] "If I do not give a special distinction to each person within the Godhead or outside and above all creatures, which is not given to the other two, then I have mixed the persons into one person; this is wrong. Therefore one should distinguish the persons within the Godhead." Chemnitz adds with regard to the use of these old church terms: *Nec existimandum est, observationes esse inanes subtilitates. Sed quia Deus vult ita agnosci, invocari et praedicari, sicut se patefecit, danda est opera, ut de illis tantis mysteriis pie sentiamus et reverenter sobrieque loquamur. Et hac in re veterum diligentiam, per quos veritas huius articuli contra haereticos propugnata et defensa est, imitari studeamus. Nam sicut inquit Jerome: "Ex verbis improprie prolatis oritur haeresis."* [Google]*

Against the terms *opera ad intra sunt divisa* and *opera ad extra sunt indivisa* an objection has been raised in former times and in our time, which has put some people in confusion. The objection is that already in the Apostolic Symbolum the *opera divina ad extra* is "distributed" among the three persons. Creation is ascribed to the Father, redemption to the Son, sanctification or the gathering and preservation of the Church to the Holy Spirit. Thus, the *opera ad extra* would not remain undivided, but would be "distributed" among the three persons, and through this "distribution" tritheism, the doctrine of three gods, would be promoted. Thus we read recently: "The actual distribution of the three *opera* to the three persons, as it is especially described in Luther's Small

Catechism, had to work in this trend", namely to seduce to the "naive" tritheism, which often prevails in the Protestant church people.¹³³⁷⁾ First of all it has to be said: No "orthodox" teacher addresses a "distribution" of the *opera ad extra* from the three persons, unless it should happen here and there by mistake or as a result of a carelessness in expression. The Christian church speaks of "attribution" (*attributio*) or "appropriation" (*appropriatio*) of the *opera ad extra* to the individual persons, but not of a "distribution" of this *opera* to the three persons. And this is how the Christian Church addresses Scripture. The scripture assigns the creation of the world to the Father in particular. This already happens in the words that the Father created the world through the Son and through the Holy Spirit (Ps. 33:6; Col. 1:15. 16; Hebr. 1:2). Likewise, the Scriptures attribute redemption to the Son in particular. This happens in all the scriptures where it is said that the Son became man, gave Himself for redemption for all, redeemed us from the curse of the law when He became a curse for us (Jn. 1:14; 1 Tim. 2:16; Gal. 3:13). Likewise, Scripture ascribes sanctification or the appropriation of purchased salvation to the Holy Spirit in particular, when it says that the Holy Spirit punishes the world for sin, for righteousness, and for judgment, that He transfigures Christ in the hearts of men, that He is the Spirit of filial piety (πνεῦμα νῑοθεΐας), who bears witness to our spirit that we are God's children, that He guides into all truth (Jn. 16:8-11, 14; Rom. 8:15-16; Jn. 16:13). But Scripture teaches just as clearly that the works mentioned are at the same time common to the three persons (*tribus personis communia*). Creation is at the same time the work of the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is taught both in the passages of Scripture in which it is said that the Father created the world through the Son and through the Spirit (Ps. 33:6; Col. 1:16; Jn. 1:3), and in the passages in which creation is said to be directly of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Heb. 1:10; Job 33:4). The redemption is at the same time the work of the Father and the Holy Spirit. This is taught when the Scripture says that God thus loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that God was in Christ and reconciled the world to himself, that Christ was conceived according to his humanity by

1337) Cf. Horst Stephan, [Glaubenslehre 1921, p. 193](#).

the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of the Lord was on Christ (Jn. 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:19; Matt. 1:18. 20; Is. 61:1; Luke 4:18). The sanctification or the acquisition of salvation is at the same time the work of the Father and the Son, when the Scripture says of both that they send the Holy Spirit, and when it is said of the Father that He chose us from the beginning for salvation in the sanctification of the Spirit and in the faith of the truth, and the Son says of Himself: "I sanctify myself for them, that they also may be sanctified in the truth", and the Christians are called sanctified in Jesus Christ, because Christ Jesus was also made for them for sanctification (Jn. 14:16, 26; 16:7; 15:26; Acts 2:33; 2 Thess. 2:13; Jn. 17:19; 1 Cor. 1:2, 30). Thus we recognize from the Scriptures a twofold truth: 1. the Scriptures attribute the *opera ad extra*, the creation, the redemption and the sanctification, to the individual persons in particular (*opera attributiva sive appropriativa*); 2. the Scriptures attribute the same works at the same time to all three persons and thus let them remain *opera tribus personis communia*. But they remain common to the three persons, because according to the Scriptures the numerically one divine essence belongs to each of the three persons completely and undividedly, and therefore also to the three persons "outwardly" or "against the creatures" the same attributes and the same works belong to them numerically. Thus, in the fact that Scripture both specially assigns the *opera ad extra* to the individual persons and allows it to remain common (*communio*) to the three persons, we have another testimony or, as Luther likes to put it, another "revelation" of the ontological or essence Trinity.

Luther treats this point very thoroughly, although he admits that it is perhaps too sharp for the "simple-minded Christians" and gives the counsel that "they may stick to their simple-minded belief that God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one God."¹³³⁸) But Luther, as we have already heard, wants both laymen and teachers of the church, who are able, to make such "somewhat sharp" things familiar to themselves for the service of the church. Thus he asks (op. cit.): "Why do we say [in the Symbol], or rather, why does Scripture teach us to say: I believe in God the Father, Creator of heaven and earth, and not also call the Son Creator? Again: To Jesus Christ, who

1338) [St. L. III, 1923](#).

was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Again, that the Holy Spirit quickened and spoke through the prophets. Here, indeed, outwardly [*ad extra*] their particular different works are assigned to the persons, as they themselves [the persons *ad intra*] are distinguished." There may be room here for an excerpt from Luther's elaboration on this point. Luther distinguishes a twofold consideration of the creature, an "absolute" and a "relative" one. Absolutely considered, the creatures tell us nothing of the fact that in God there are three persons, "because they are all alike one work of the three persons as of the one God". But there is also a "relative" consideration of the creatures. This relative consideration consists in the fact that we pay attention to "how God uses the creatures against us", namely against us men, in order to reveal the Trinity to us also in the creatures. Luther goes on to say about this: "So God needs the dove to be an image or revelation in which the Holy Spirit reveals Himself, and is a different image, which does not show the Father nor the Son to us, but only the Holy Spirit, differently. For the Father, Son and Holy Spirit wants the dove to show and reveal to us differently the Person of the Holy Spirit alone, so that we may be certain that God's one Being is certainly three distinct Persons from eternity. This is why Luke ch. 3:22 says: 'The Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove'. In the same way, we speak of the Son as being revealed to us in humanity, or, as St. Paul addresses Phil. 2:7, in the form of a servant, behaving like another man. And this form or humanity is not the image or revelation of the Father or the Holy Spirit, although it is the same creature of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, but it is a different form and revelation of the Son alone. For so it pleased God, that is, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that the Son through this form or likeness of mankind should be revealed and known among men as a distinct person from the Father and Holy Spirit, in one eternal, unified being of divine nature. The same is to be said of the Father, that he is revealed to us in voice. This form or shape is not the Son's or Holy Spirit's form or revelation, but only the Father's, who in such a different form wanted to be known to us as a distinct person from the Son and Holy Spirit, in

an unseparated divine being." To illustrate this further, Luther cites a "rough parable". He says: "To understand such a high thing, the Doctors, especially Bonaventure, give a rough parable. For example, if three virgins put on a garment for one of them, and all three of them took hold of the garment and put it on the third, and the third also took hold of it in the same way, then all three put on the garment of the third, and yet only the third is put on with the garment, and not the other two. Thus it is to be understood here that all three persons [in God], as one God, created the one humanity and united it with the Son in his person, that only the Son is man and not the Father nor Holy Spirit. Likewise also the dove, which takes the Person of the Holy Spirit, and the voice, which takes the Person of the Father; the fiery tongues on the day of Pentecost, wherein the Person of the Holy Spirit is manifested; the wind, and the rest of the things which are preached of the Holy Spirit, that He should work in Christendom, or in the Holy Scriptures. ... Now when we speak in childlike faith: I believe in God the Father, Almighty Creator of heaven and earth', is not the opinion that the Person of the Father alone should be Almighty, Creator and Father, but the Son is also Almighty, Creator and Father; the Holy Spirit also Almighty, Creator and Father; and yet not three Almighty, Creator, Fathers, but one Almighty, Creator, Father of heaven and earth and of us all, even as the Father is our Savior and Redeemer, the Son our Savior and Redeemer, the Holy Spirit our Savior and Redeemer, and yet not three Saviors and Redeemers, but one Savior and Redeemer. Just as the Father is our God, the Son our God, the Holy Spirit our God, yet not three Gods, but one God: so the Holy Spirit sanctifies Christendom, the Father also, the Son also, yet are not three Sanctifiers, but one Sanctifier, etc. *Opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa. But it is spoken for this reason, that we believe and recognize differently three persons in the one Godhead and do not mix the persons nor separate the essence.*"¹³³⁹)

1339) Chemnitz writes, *Loci* 1, 42 sq., on the same point, referring also to Luther's execution: *Personae distinguuntur non tantum interioribus discriminibus, ut sunt gignere, genitum esse, procedere, verum etiam*

A few individual remarks may be added here.

1. The Εκπορεύεται, Jn. 16:26 said by the Holy Spirit: ὁ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς Εκπορεύεται, is referred by Luther and the dogmatists "as almost self-evident" not only to the temporal (economic) procession, but to the eternal (ontological, inner-tinitarian) procession from the Father. This conception of the Εκπορεύεται has also passed into the symbols. Athanasian Creed: *Spiritus Sanctus a Patre et Filio, non factus, nec creatus, nec genitus, sed procedens*. More recent theologians are divided. Only from the temporal or economic procession understand the εκπορεύεσθαι by Hofmann, Meyer, Luthardt, Klostermann,

exterioribus, sumptis praecipue a patefactione et beneficiis erga ecclesiam, sicut in definitione cuiusque personae patet. In operibus enim ad extra tres personae sunt simul et simul operantur; sed tamen ordine quodam et servata cuiusque personae proprietate, sicut inquit Augustinus contra Felicianum. Vid, 1 Cor. 15:57: Deo gratia, qui dedit nobis victoriam per Dominum nostrum Iesum Christ. Patres saepe allegant illud Pauli Rom. 11:36: "Ex ipso, per ipsum, in ipso omnia; ipsi honor et gloria." Quia enim apostolus loquitur de operibus ad extra, mentionem facit unius aeternae essentiae: "ipsi honor", non ipsis. Et tamen sicut una est essentia, sine confusione personarum, ita facit opera ad extra communia tribus personis, sine confusione, sed insinuat discrimen personarum: "Ex ipso, in ipso, per ipsum." Considerantur ergo opera ad extra, sicut annotavit magnus noster Martinus Lutherus dupliciter. [Google] Primo absolute: et ita sine discrimine, sunt et dicuntur opera trium personarum communiter. Secundo, relative: quando considerantur, quo ordine agant personae, quae sit cuiusque personae proprietas, quae persona agat immediate. Et ita consideratur opus creationis, redemptionis et sanctificationis et absolute et relative. Et. aliquo modo inde considerari potest, cur aliquando una tantum persona exprimatur, vel duae, quando intelligitur tota Trinitas, sic scilicet: Pater, fons bonitatis, ut veteres loquuntur, dicitur solus potens etc., item Creator. Pater et Filius spirant Spiritum Sanctum in corda credentium, unde dicitur Ioh. 14:23: "Ego et Pater veniemus et mansionem apud eum faciemus." Et 1 Ioh. 3:24: "Ex Spiritu scimus, quod Pater et Filius sint in nobis." Summa: Sicut credimus essentiae unitatem et tamen non debemus admittere personarum confusionem. Ita intelligenda est et illa regula: opera ad extra esse communia tribus personis, ita tamen, ne confundantur discrimina et proprietates personarum. Et hac observatione tota vetustas in solutionibus saepe usa est. In invocatione vero omnino necessaria est illa observatio. Quamvis enim cultus divinus indivisus est, sicut opera ad extra, tamen invocatio ecclesiae hac potissimum ratione seiungitur ab invocatione et cultu reliquarum gentium omnium. Quia non confuse invocatur tres personas, sed considerat discrimina et beneficia cuiusque personae propria. [Google]

on the other hand from the eternal or inner-tinitarian procession Olshausen, Stier, Lange, Godet. Olshausen: "In this place alone is found the Εκπορεύεσθαι, which has become symbolic, of the Holy Spirit . . . Quite misleading and proceeding from a wrong view of the Trinity relation is de Wette's remark on this passage. He wills that the παρά τον πατρός Εκπορεύεται does not go to the essence but to the appearance of the Holy Spirit in His Christian efficacy. To this [the temporal efficacy] refers rather the πέμψω παρά τον πατρός, but in the subordinate clause (το πνευμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὃ παρά τοῦ πατρός Εκπορεύεται) is just the eternal essential relationship of the Spirit to the Father expressed." Luthardt refutes himself especially clearly when he wants to refer παρά τον πατρός Εκπορεύεται to the economic or "historical" outcome. He notes, "This statement stands parallel to the other: ὃν ἐγὼ πέμψω παρά τον πατρός; παρά τον πατρός is said both times." However, both times it is called παρά τον πατρός. But the tense changes very strikingly, which Godet also points out: πέμψω is a future tense, and Εκπορεύεται is a present tense. When the Savior says futurally, "Which I will send you (πέμψω) from the Father," He is clearly speaking of the temporal or economic efficacy of the Holy Spirit, which will occur after He has gone to the Father, John 16:7. Likewise, with respect to the Holy Spirit, the further futuric statement follows, "which will testify of Me" (μαρτυρήσει). This also refers to the temporal, economic efficacy of the Holy Spirit. But if now in the statement, which stands between the two futura, it is said in the present tense: "the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father" (Εκπορεύεται), the change of tense entails that we do not think of an act temporal to the faithful) and coordinated, but of an act pretemporal, eternal. If the statement referred only to the temporal efficacy of the Holy Spirit, it would read according to the future tenses πέμψω and μαρτυρήσει: εκπορεύσεται, which will proceed from the Father.¹³⁴⁰⁾

 1340) Cf. Quenstedt I, 577 in his polemic against the Socinians, who also claimed, to Jn. 15:26, *verbum prooedere esse intelligendum non de processione aeterna, sed de temporaria, qua Spiritus Sanctus mittitur ad apostolos aliosque fideles*. ["The word "proceeding" is to be understood not as an eternal procession, but as a temporary one, by which the Holy Spirit is sent to the apostles and other faithful."] Quenstedt answers: *Processionem hoc loco clare distinguit Dominus a missione, ὃν ἐγὼ πέμψω, ὃ εκπορεύεται- Ergo his verbis: "Qui a Patre procedit", non temporalem missionem, sed*

2. Just as recent theologians appeal to Luther in denying the inspiration of Scripture, so they do in rejecting the terminology used by the early church and dogmatists in expounding the doctrine of the Trinity. On the one hand, Luther is reproached for not daring to build a new doctrine, but for adopting the early church confessions of the Trinity as well founded in Scripture. On the other hand, it is said that Luther's actual position on the doctrine of the Trinity does not coincide with the position of the ancient or "orthodox" church. Luther had disapproved of the word "Trinity" as well as of the Latin word "*trinitas*" and had also occasionally expressed that he would not let the ὁμοούσιος be imposed on him. We already saw what the disapproval of the words "Trinity" and "*trinitas*" was all about. Luther, however, says of both words that they "do not sound precious," but immediately adds that we have no better words in this article, "which is high above all human understanding and language."¹³⁴¹ As for the ὁμοούσιος, however, Luther says in 1521 in his writing against Latomus:¹³⁴² "Now if my soul hated the word *homousios* and I did not want to use it, I would not be a heretic. For who could force me to use [this word], if I only hold the thing which was established at the council from Scripture?" Latin: *Quodsi odit, anima mea vocem homousion et nolim ea uti, non ero haereticus. Quis*

aeternam processionem intelligit. ... Idem probat praesentis temporis forma expressa, εκπορεύεται, non εκπορεύεται... . Illa [processio aeterna], ut generatio Filii Dei hodie, est semper praesens, nunquam in se vel praeterita, vel futura aut desitura, ast ista temporalis est, όταν ε'λθῃ, cum venerit, quem ego mittam in futuro, scii, in festo Pentecostes. [[Google](#)] Quenstedt also already deals with a justification that Luthardt contributes in Zöckler's commentary on this passage for his temporal version of εκπορεύεται. Namely, Luthardt remarks on παρά τον πατρός εκπορεύεται: "Understood by the ancient church and church dogmatics of the *processio aeterna Spiritus Sancti* and held up by the Greek church to the occidental *Filioque*. But according to the whole context (?) and because of παρά, 'from the environment,' from — her, not εκ, 'from within' (cf. Winer, § 47, b.), to be understood only in the historical sense." To this Quenstedt says: *Excipiunt porro*, namely, the Socinians, *Christ non dicere δ εκπορεύεται εκ τον πατρός, sed παρά τον πατρός. Respondeo: 1. Tό παρά non excludit τό εξ originationis; 2. etiam Filius dicitur μονογενής πατρός, Ioh. 1:14:scii, generatione. Ergo in hoc mysterio idem est εκ τον πατρός et παρά τον πατρός.* [[Google](#)]

1341) [St. L. XII. 629](#). 1342) [St. L. XVIII. 1182](#). Opp. v. a. V, 506.

enim me coget uti, modo rem teneam, quae in concilio per Scripturas definita est. "But if my soul hates the voice of *homousion* and I refuse to use it, I will not be a heretic. For who shall compel me to use it, so long as I hold the matter which was determined in the council by the Scriptures?"] Luther, as is evident from his address, speaks conditionally. He assumes the case that he would have a strong aversion against the expression *homousios*, but would still hold the thing denoted by the expression on the basis of Scripture, so he would not become a heretic. Putting the same case, we will speak in the same way today. Philippi rightly reminds us,¹³⁴³⁾ that even the Lutheran dogmatists always ascribed to themselves only a conditional, not an absolute, necessity to the church expressions. Luther himself still remarks in his later writings, including his exposition of the last words of David in 1543:¹³⁴⁴⁾ "But to whom it is too difficult [to find his way into the church expressions], let him stay with the children in catechismo and pray against the devil and his heresy, against Jews and Mahomet, so that he will not be deceived into temptation." How wholeheartedly Luther professed *homousios* to Arianism is clear from the debate, already partially quoted earlier, which is found in his writing "Von den Conciliis und Kirchen" (1539). After he has clearly and sharply explained which excuses the Arians sought by hiding their heresy behind scriptural words which they misinterpreted, he continues:¹³⁴⁵⁾ "Sixth, when it came to the heart that Christ was *homousios* with the Father, that is, that Christ was the same with the Father and had the same Godhead, the same power, they could no longer find any trick, hole, rank, or swindle. *Homousios* means one and the same being or nature or one and the same and not two beings, as the Fathers had set in the Concil and is sung in Latin, *consubstantialis*, some called *coexistentialis*, *coessentialis* afterwards. They (the Arians) had accepted this at Nicaea in the Concil and still accepted it when they had to address the emperor and the fathers. But in their own, they challenged it extremely hard, pretended that such a word did not stand in Scripture, held many councils, even in Constantine's time, so that they would weaken the Council at Nicaea, caused much misfortune, and afterwards made ours so anxious that even St. Jerome, upset by it, wrote a miserable letter to the bishop of Rome, Damason, and began to request that such a word *homousius* should be scratched out. For I do not know, he says, what

1343) [Glaubenslehre 2 II, 156 f.](#) 1344) [St. L. III, 1920 f.](#)

1345) [St. L. XVI, 2211 f.](#)

what poison is in the letter, that the Arians make themselves so useless about it. And there is still a Dialog, in which Athanasius and Arius quarrel before a magistrate, Probus, about this word *homousius*. And when Arius insisted that such a word did not stand in the Scriptures, Athanasius caught Arius again with the same art and said: "Nor do these words stand in Scripture: *innascibilis, ingenitus Deus*, that is, God is unborn," which the Arians had used to prove that Christ could not be God because he was born, but God was unborn, etc. And the magistrate Probus judged against Arius. For it is true that one should not teach anything in doctrines apart from the Scriptures, as St. Hilarius writes in 1. *De Trin.* This does not mean otherwise, because one should not teach anything else. But that one should not need more or different words, neither in the Scriptures stand, that can not be kept, especially in the dispute, and when the heretics want to make things wrong with blind grips and turn the words of Scripture; It was necessary to put the opinion of Scripture, which was set forth in many sayings, into a short and summary word, and to ask whether they held Christ *homousion*, as the opinion of Scripture is in all words, which they had perverted with false glosses among their own, but had freely confessed before the emperor and in the Council. Just as if the Pelagians wanted to drive us with this word 'original sin' or 'Adam's plague', because such words do not stand in Scripture, yet Scripture teaches the same words opinion mightily, as: that we are conceived in sin, Ps. 51:5, all by nature children of wrath, Eph. 2:3, and all must be sinners for one sin's sake, Rom. 5:12."

9. More detailed exposition of the scriptural doctrine of God's nature and attributes. [^] *(De essentia et attributis divinis.)*

The doctrine of God (*De Deo*) is usually placed under two sections: "Of God's Being and Attributes" and "Of the Holy Trinity". Whether this order of sections is followed or the reverse is immaterial as long as the Scripture Principle is adhered to, that is, as long as no human thoughts are inserted into either the doctrine of God's nature and attributes or the doctrine of the Trinity. In fact, it stands that neither of these doctrines can be dealt with,

without always taking in the other. If we wanted to treat the doctrine of God's nature and attributes without regard to the doctrine of the Trinity, we would only be moving in the area of natural theology, with the exclusion of the Christian knowledge of God. Therefore Chemnitz already takes under the section "*De Deo in Genere*"¹³⁴⁶⁾ of the longer that without the knowledge of Christ and thus of the Trinity there is *ignorantia Dei*, if we look at the practical result, namely the worship of God. On the other hand, the doctrine of the Trinity cannot be presented without also dealing with God's nature and attributes. It must be constantly taken into account that the three *realiter distinctae personae* of the divine majesty have *eadem numero essentia divina* ["the same number as the divine essence"] and *eadem numero attributa divina* ["divine attributes by the same number"]. We have alternated in the arrangement of the sections over time. This time we have prefixed the section on the Trinity in order to make the difference between the natural and the Christian knowledge of God, which is especially generally forgotten in our time, stand out sharply from the very beginning. But there now remains a closer exposition of the Scriptural doctrine of God's nature and attributes in relation to several matters, some important and some much treated. We treat under this section A. the relationship of the divine essence to the divine attributes and of the attributes to each other, B. the classification of the divine attributes. This is followed by C. a description of the individual divine attributes on the basis of Scripture.

A. The relationship of the divine essence to the divine attributes and of the attributes to each other. [^]

With respect to this, there are two points to be noted on the basis of Scripture:

In God, essence and attributes are not parts, but one, because God is infinite, above space (1 Kings 8:27) and time (Ps. 90:2, 4). If we wanted to accept parts in God, we would make the infinite God infinite and thus abolish the difference between God and the creatures. The Augsburg Confession says in the first article "Of God" (*De Deo*): "without parts."

1346) *Loci* I, 22 sq.

But we men have to distinguish in God essence and attributes and then also the attributes among themselves, because we cannot have any idea at all of a simple thing. And this distinction is taught in the doctrines themselves. Scripture distinguishes between God and God's attributes when it speaks of God's love (Rom. 5:8), God's wrath (Rom. 1:18), God's longsuffering (Rom. 2:4) and so on. When we hear of God's love, we think of God as existing and love as an attribute attached to God. If Scripture tells us of God's wrath, we think of God as existing and wrath as a God-attaching quality. With God having entered into human language, He has also entered into human thought connection (logic).¹³⁴⁷ Next, Scripture also distinguishes among the divine attributes by motivating the individual divine actions by various divine attributes or "*affectiones*" in God. Scripture attributes the sending of the Son of God into the world to the love of God, John 3:16: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son", the justification or forgiveness of sins to the grace of God through the redemption that happened through Jesus Christ without human merit (Rom. 3:24), the damnation of the ungodly on the Last Day of God's retributive punitive justice, "because it is right with God (εἵπερ δίκαιον παρὰ θεῷ) to repay tribulation to those who put tribulation on you" (2 Thess. 1:6). Daniel, in his prayer, distinguishes very sharply between the divine attributes when he says, "We lie before thee with our prayer, not upon our righteousness, but upon thy great mercy," Dan. 9:18. If, under the pretext that all the attributes of God form an indivisible unity, the divine attributes are interchanged, the whole theology is thereby falsified. The Scriptures teach this very emphatically in word and example. All who base the forgiveness of sins on the works of the law (their own morality) instead of on the grace of God,

 1347) Our dogmatists say something like: *Intelligitur nomine essentiae divinae illud, quod primo in Deo concipitur quodque nostro modo concipiendi* (according to our comprehension] *principium et radix est omnium perfectionum, quae Deo per modum proprietatum* (according to the way of properties) *tribuuntur.* [[Google](#)] Thus [Baier II, 11](#).

which is present through Christ's *satisfactio vicaria*, do not receive the forgiveness of sins but the curse, Gal. 3:10. By substituting grace for the righteousness of the law, carnal Israel deprived itself of membership in the kingdom of God,¹³⁴⁸⁾ and the Pharisee remained unjustified before God.¹³⁴⁹⁾ Because of the same substitution of the attributes of God, Paul twice pronounces the curse on teachers who had penetrated the Galatian congregations.^{1349a)} Therefore, it is necessary to avoid with great care any interchange of the divine attributes, because this produces a false concept of God and *eo ipso* apostasy from the true God who has revealed Himself in His Word of God. To remain with the examples of the substitution of divine attributes given: there is no such God, who instead of justifying by grace alone for the sake of Christ's *satisfactio vicaria* on the basis of his justice under the law. All who deny Christ's *satisfactio vicaria* worship an idol like the heathen who know nothing of God. — The warning against substitution of the divine attributes includes the further warning that we men do not allow ourselves to say more and different things about the divine attributes than are actually said about the individual attributes in the Holy Scriptures. As is well known, Unitarians and modern theologians reject the Scriptural doctrines of eternal damnation and the vicarious satisfaction of Christ, claiming that both doctrines stand in contradiction with both the love and the righteousness of God. Against this it must be stated: To want to determine *a priori*, that is, apart from God's self-revelation in his Word, what God can or must do according to his love or according to his righteousness, or what is compatible or incompatible with his love or with his righteousness, is a foolish and blasphemous undertaking. It is based on the premise that we men could encompass God's love, God's righteousness, etc., with our thoughts, whereas it stands that, like God Himself, God's attributes are infinite and therefore beyond our human capacity to comprehend.

The Lutheran dogmatists hold both according to Scripture: 1. that objectively, or in God, essence and attributes absolutely are

1348) Rom. 9:31-33; 10:1-3 1349) Luke 18:9-14.

1349 a) Gal. 1:8-9.

One, because God is infinite and above space and time.. 2. But because the finite human mind cannot take into its conception the infinite and absolute, God condescends to human weakness, dividing himself, as it were, into parts, by revealing himself in his Word in a series of attributes which we can grasp and hold on to in faith. Baier says:¹³⁵⁰⁾ *Licet vera [perfectiones sive proprietates] non sint accidentia neque ab essentia divina realiter differant, distinguuntur autem ab essentia divina pariter et inter se propter infinitam Dei perfectionem et intellectus nostri imperfectionem.* [[Google](#)] Gerhard:¹³⁵¹⁾ *Quamvis attributa Dei nec inter se nec ab essentia divina realiter sint in Deo distincta, tamen sigillatim de illis ut agatur, intellectus nostri imbecillitas requirit,* Gerhard quotes from Augustine's *De Spec., c. 112*: "*Condescendit nobis Deus, ut nos consurgamus*", *et cum homines simus, humano modo nobis loquitur....* Dorner cannot understand,¹³⁵²⁾ that Lutheran dogmatists on the one hand teach "the objective indistinction" of divine attributes, but on the other hand declare it necessary for us men "to distinguish, for example, righteousness and mercy." Dorner, as an Ego theologian who has bid farewell to Scripture as the source and norm of theology, may find it difficult to find himself in the manner of the ancient theologians. The ancient theologians were scriptural theologians. From the Scriptures they had learned that God, on the one hand, describes Himself as the infinite God, "without part", on the other hand, divides Himself, as it were, into parts or matters, describing Himself in His Word as the holy and righteous and gracious and long-suffering God, etc., for the purpose of conveying in this way to the finite human spirit a knowledge of God, admittedly not perfect, which does not belong in this life, but a true knowledge of God, sufficient for the attainment of salvation. This is the reason why dogmatists both teach the "objective indistinction" of the divine attributes and hold to the necessity of distinguishing the divine attributes, "e.g., righteousness and mercy." And all theologians, who want to be theologians of the Scriptures, do well, herein

1350) [Comp. II, 11](#).

1351) *Loci, L. De Natura Dei*, § 51 (Ed. Frankf. u. Hamb. 1657 I, 59).

1352) *Geschichte der prot. Theologie*, p. 563 f.

to follow the dogmatists. For on the one hand, no theologian of Scripture will seriously accept parts in God. On the other hand, however, every scriptural theologian will want to remain in harmony with the apostle Paul, who explicitly describes the knowledge of God imparted in this life by God's Word as a "piecemeal" one, 1 Cor. 13:9: Ἐκ μέρους γινώσκομεν καὶ ἐκ μέρους ηὐροφητεῦμεν.

In describing the knowledge of God that comes to us men in this life on the basis of the divine attributes and works revealed in Word of God, one difficulty has been found in the fact that the same predicates are said of God and creatures. However, both being (existence) and a number of attributes and works are predicated of God and creatures in Scripture. Examples: God is (Is 48:12: "It is I, the first and the last"), and men are (Acts 17:28: ἐν αὐτῷ ... ἐσμέν); God lives (Ezek. 14:16: "As I live, says the Lord"), and man lives (Gen. 3:20: Eve is a mother of all living); God loves (Jn. 3:16: "So God loved the world"), and man loves (1 Kings. 5:1: "Hiram loved David"); God is righteous (Rom. 3:26: "that He [God] might be righteous"), and men are righteous (Matt. 1:19: Joseph, the husband of Mary, was δίκαιος); God sees (Gen. 1:31: "God looked upon all that He had made"), and man sees (Deut. 32:52: Moses saw from Mount Nebo the land of Canaan), etc. Now here it has been asked in what way these predicates are ascribed to God and to themselves. The scriptural answer is: a. Not in the same sense (*univoce*), so that name and thing would be attributed to God and creatures in the same way; b. also not in a double sense (*aequivoce*), so that only the same expressions would be used by God and creatures, but in the thing there would be no relation or similarity at all, but c. according to similarity (*analogice*), so that being and attributes would really be attributed to God and creatures, but not in the same way and in the same degree. We ascend (*consurgimus*, says Augustine) from the imperfection found in creatures (imperfect being, living, loving, etc.) to the perfection in God (perfect being, living, loving, etc.). This analogical view is explicitly taught in the Scriptures, e.g. Is. 49:15: "Can also a woman forget her child

that she have not mercy on the son of her womb? Though she forget him, yet will I not forget thee, saith the Lord." Further Luke 11:13: "If you then, being bad, can give (οἷδατε) good gifts to your children [out of natural love], how much more will the Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" If we were to ascribe beings and attributes to God and creatures *univoce*, as Scotists and others have done, we would, strictly speaking, abolish the distinction between God and creatures. Creatures would be coordinated to God and thus made God. If we were to go to the other extreme and let the nature and attributes of God and the creatures be stated only *aequivoce*, we would thereby, strictly speaking, deny all knowledge of God. We would then not know, for example, if something and what is in God, when he assures us of his love in his word, 1 John 4:16: "God is love" and John 3:16: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." But now, thank God, the great God has entered into our human language and has condescended to our human ideas and concepts in order to lift us up to Himself and to let us recognize how His heart stands against us. This knowledge is indeed only an inadequate, fragmentary knowledge (1 Cor. 13:9), but nevertheless a true and sure knowledge, so that we can know what has been given to us by God (1 Cor. 2:12). The Lutheran dogmatists dealt with this point in detail and rejected everything that could endanger the Christian knowledge of God on the basis of God's self-revelation in His Word.¹³⁵³⁾

 1353) Quenstedt I, 422 sq.: *Essentia, substantia, spiritus et consequenter reliqua attributa, quae Deo et creaturis simul tribuuntur, de Deo et creaturis rationalibus non συνωνυμῶς, univoce, nec δμωνυμῶς, aequivoce, sed ἀναλόγως, analogice, praedicantur, ita ut Deo πρῶτως et absolute, creaturis δευτερώς et per dependentiam convenient; quae analogia proprie dicitur attributionis intrinsecae. ... Univoce, proprie et stricte loquendo, conveniunt, quae et nomen et rem, nomine illo denotatam, communem habent aequaliter, nulla ob dependentiam unius ab altero inaequalitate inter-veniente. Aequivoco conveniunt, quae nomen habent commune, sed non rem, nomine significatam. Analogice conveniunt, quae et nomen et rem, nomine designatam, communem habent, sed inaequaliter, cum nomen et res alteri πρῶτως et absolute, alteri δευτερώς et per dependentiam convenient. [Google] Dogma-historical has Quenstedt under the antithesis, p. 423: Antithesis: I. Scoti*

Among the predicates which God attaches to Himself in His Word are, of course, the names of God. One has asked about the number of these names. Luther does not think much of the ten number of names, because it is not exhaustive. He says in his "Treatise on the Shem Hamphoras":¹³⁵⁴ "I let go of the ten names, as this is not new, but also St. Jerome in *Epistola ad Marcellam* indicates, since he counts them thus: El, Elohim, Elohe, Zebaoth, Eljon, Ehje, Adonai, Jah, Jehovah, damage. Others do it differently. I don't think much of it. There are probably more names of God in Scripture than these, as: Ab, Bore, Or, Chai, etc., Father, Creator, Light, Life, Salvation, and the like. And what good can be called or be, which must not be assigned to God beforehand, as he has it in himself? as Christ speaks:

*et Scotistarum atque quorundam Nominalium, statuentium, ens, essentiam, spiritum etc. de Deo et creaturis univoce praedicari. Ita Scotus, Occam, Gabriel Biel et al, quos inter se profitetur Slevogtus, Prof. Jen., Disput. Academ., § 46, p. 66, inquit: "Cum itaque ens respectu inferiorum non sit analogum, quomocunque etiam analogia explicetur, et vero iis non nomen tantum, sed ratio etiam entis vere competat, nihil est, cur, univocum istud esse, quisquam negare velit; nos inde Scotisticam scholam sequimur et quosdam Nominales." Haec ille. 2. quorundam scholasticorum aliorumque, qui essentiam, substantiam, spiritum etc. de Deo et creaturis intellectualibus nonnisi ὁμωνύμως seu aequivoce praedicari statuunt, ut Aureolus, Polanus (asserens, "spiritum de Deo, angelis et animabus hominum ὁμωνύμως seu aequivoce praedicari"), Keckermannus (spiritum existimans de Deo aequivoce dici). Eandem sententiam R. Mosi tribuit Thomas, quod scii, ens praedicetur de Deo et creaturis aequivoce. [Google] Dionysius Petavius, tom. V, Dogmat. Theol., 1. 1, c. 6, § 4. 5, p. 40 sq., ubi τό vere et proprie esse ac existere soli Deo convenire prolixè probat. ... Thomas, Ps. I, q. 13, art. 5, ita colligit: "Si aequivoce ista praedicarentur de Deo et creaturis, nihil posset de Deo ex creaturis cognosci nec demonstrari, sed semper incideret fallacia aequivocationis. Et hoc est tam contra philosophum, qui multa demonstrative de Deo probat, quam etiam contra apostolum, Rom. 1, 17 sq." Conceptus aequivocus sequentia infert absurda: 1. Sic creaturae nudum entis nomen participarent et revera essent non-entia. Sed quis Deum nuda produxisse non-entia assereret? 2. si creatura plane non-ens esset, ad Deum referri non posset ceu effectus et ens dependens. 3. Christus, assumens naturam humanam, assumpsisset non-ens.... [Google] Also some Calvinists have claimed that the attributes in God are non-entia. They did this in the interest of their false Christology, in order to be able to deny the communication of the divine attributes to the human nature of Christ: *Quod quis non habet, illud alteri dare non potest; sed Deus attributa non habet, ergo alteri, scii, naturae humanae Christi, ea dare et communicare non potest.* ["What one does not have, he cannot give to another; but God has no attributes, therefore he cannot give and communicate them to another, to the knowledge of the human nature of Christ."] 93gl. Duenftebt I, 427.*

¹³⁵⁴) [St. L. XX, 2057](#).

God alone is good, but we receive from him all that we are and have." This is followed by Luther's powerful statement (already communicated on p. 463) about the uniqueness of the name יהוה [HEBREW], which according to Ex. 3:14 means "Pure Being" (*nomen Dei essentielle sive incommunicabile*).¹³⁵⁵ Rightly [Zöckler](#)¹³⁵⁶ points out the games which Rome, heathens and Turks play with the number of God's names: "That that accumulation of God's names or predicates up to the number 100 or beyond — see Raym. Lull: *De centum nominibus Dei*; the 150 names with which St. Rosa of Lima used to address God in her devotions [Görres, Christi. Mystik I, 472] —, also the "100 biblical names of H. J. Christ" (edited with the relevant biblical passages by J. Blüher, Dresden, 1870) as well as Luis de Leon's three 'Books of the Name of Christ' (Spanish, Salamanka, 1583) as an older mystical-ascetic execution of the same thought — are equally devoid of theological-scientific concern as of Christian-religious value, show the analogous gimmicks in the battological prayer practice already of the older paganism as well as of Buddhism and Islam. About the 550 names under which Allah occurs in the Koran, and of which 99 are said to be the sweetest and most beautiful when praying the 99 rosary beads, cf. the work of Edwin Arnold: *Pearls of the Faith, or Islams Rosary*, being the 99 beautiful names of Allah. London 1882." This battology, which is practiced with the names of God by Rome, heathens, Turks, etc., has its factual reason in the fact that they all do not know the name of Jesus Christ, in whom we have the redemption through his blood, namely the forgiveness of our sins. Consequently, the "*opinio legis*" rules in them and they also want to make themselves a gracious God by parroting many names of God. That also the modern "theological science" in relation to the correct description of the

 1355) We almost forgot to mention that no agreement has yet been reached among recent theologians about the vocalization of יהוה [HEBREW]. Quite generally יהוה [HEBREW] is rejected (exceptions: Stier, Hölemann). However, whether XXXX [HEBREW] or יהוה [HEBREW] or something else should be used for this, the proceedings find not yet concluded. Strack: "probably" *Iahve*. Kahn: "As has been pronounced, is still not certain." What the name means, namely "Pure Being", as Luther expresses it, we know from Ex. 3:14, where God Himself declares this name etymologically and factually.

1356) [Handbuch der theol. Wissenschaften III, 85](#) f.

names and attributes of God, as we have already seen and will continue to see, comes from the fact that it does not consider the Holy Scriptures to be God's own Word. For indeed the whole Holy Scriptures are "a spread out name of God." Inasmuch as we deny that Scripture is the infallible self-revelation of God, we exclude ourselves in principle from knowledge of the name of God. Here belong Luther's recurring reminders that by right doctrine taken from Scripture alone God's name is honored and the church built up; by false doctrine derived from one's own thoughts God's name is profaned and the church destroyed. For example, he says in the exposition of the second commandment:¹³⁵⁷⁾ "So, in this commandment, the name of God is rightly conducted when the Word of God is rightly preached, and is rightly received by the hearers. And again, the name of God is blasphemed when pastors do not preach rightly, but deceive the people, yet under the appearance of divine Word and name." Therefore, right teachers and doctrines are a blessing, but wrong teachers and pastors are a curse for the world and the individual countries. At the same time, Luther reminds us of the "danger" that is bound up with the right doctrines of the name, that is, the Word of God. He says: "But this is the greatest and most difficult work of this commandment, that one should esteem the holy name of God against all who spiritually misuse it, and for this purpose spread it among all men. For it is not enough that I praise and call upon the divine name for myself and in myself in happiness and in misfortune, I must also go out and for the sake of God's honor and name invite upon myself the enmity of all men, as Christ says to his disciples: 'All men will be enemies to you for my name's sake.' Here we must enrage father and mother and best friends. ... Here also we must have the name to strive against the authorities spiritually and worldly and be scolded disobediently. Here we must arouse against us the learned, the saints, the rich, the powerful, and all that is anything in the world; that is called 'God's friend and the enemy of all the world'. And although those who are commanded to preach the Word of God are especially obliged to do so, every Christian is also bound to do so where time and need require it. Now when a man accepts the Word of God, the gospel, then

1357) [St. L. III, 1078 ff.](#)

he must not think otherwise than that in the same hour he will be in danger of all his goods, house, farm, fields and meadows, wife, children, father and mother, even his own life. If danger and misfortune come to him at home, it is all the easier for him and he thinks, I knew it well before that [it] would be like this. That is where the passages Matt. 10: 'The disciple is not above the master.'

B. Various Classifications of divine attributes. [^]

The divine attributes have been divided *docendi causa* differently. Among the Lutheran theologians, we find two main divisions: 1. into dormant and active, 2. into negative and positive attributes.

Resting are called those attributes which denote no effect on the world or no relationship to the world, but are thought of as resting in God, closed off from the world, as it were, such as: Eternity, Simplicity, Infinity, etc. They are more or less appropriately called *attributa immanentia*, *quiescentia*, ἀνενέργεια; more recent expression: attributes of "world withdrawal." Active are called the attributes that denote an effect of God on the world or a relationship with the world, such as omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, righteousness, mercy. Terminological designation: *attributa relativa*, *operativa*, *transeuntia ἐνεργητικά*., newer expression: attributes of the „world-relatedness".¹³⁵⁸⁾

In the division of attributes into negative and positive, negative attributes are those by which perfections found in creatures are negated or eliminated in the description of God. In this class are reckoned: Unity, simplicity, immutability, infinity, immensity, eternity. Positively one can call the qualities, by which perfections, which are found with the creatures, are ascribed to God in the higher degree or in absolute perfection. Here belong the

1358) Quenstedt I, 409: *Attributorum duo sunt genera: quaedam essentiam divinam describunt absolute et in se citra respectum ad operationem dicunturque immanentia, ἀνενέργητα seu quiescentia, quae scii, non sunt ordinata ad aliquos actus, ut immensitas, aeternitas, spiritualitas etc. Quedam essentiam divinam describunt respective, ratione ἐνεργείας, seu operativa et ad extra se exserentia, sive quae ad certas operationes directa esse cognoscuntur, ut sunt potentia, scientia, iustitia, misericordia.* [[Google](#)]

attributes: Life, knowledge, wisdom, holiness and righteousness, truthfulness, power, goodness, love, grace, mercy.¹³⁵⁹⁾

Among the newer theologians there is a great diversity of classification, as noted by Nitzsch-Stephan.¹³⁶⁰⁾ The divisions of the old theologians are expressly rejected, e.g. when it is said, loc. cit.: "The distinction between dormant and active or between those of world-removedness and world-relatedness or between negative and positive is no longer possible in the whole conception of the qualities." The difference of the divisions has its reason with the newer theologians in the fact that they have given up the Scripture Principle and have put in its place the Ego Principle. In contrast to the old theologians, they do not want to describe the divine attributes from and according to Holy Scriptures, but to "work them out" from the self-consciousness of the theologian. "What does not arise with inner necessity (according to the opinion of the ego) from revelation and faith is eliminated." If newer theologians use divisions that are also found among the old theologians, this is done in a different sense. For the ancient theologians, despite various divisions, hold that all divine attributes are identical with the unchanging divine essence. *In Deo nihil est mutabile vel amissibile*, The attributes in *Deo non sunt res distinctae ab ipsa essentia, sed vita, sapientia, gratia etc. sunt ipsa Dei substantia nec possunt in eo ut in hominibus mutari*. [[Google](#)]¹³⁶¹⁾ Modern kenotics, on the other hand, such as Thomasius, use the division into *attributa immanentia* or *absoluta* and *transeuntia* or *relativa* to make the claim that the *attributa relativa* of omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience are not essential divine attributes but can be separated from God. They hold

1359) [Baier](#) follows this division. [He describes II, 16](#) the negative attributes as such, *vel vi vocum vel vi significationis negationem quandam aut remotionem imperfectionis alicuius ex his, quae in creaturis occurrunt, important, the positive as such, quae cum respectu ad perfectionem, quas in creaturis deprehendimus, et per modum illarum, licet in eminentiore gradu, concipiuntur*. In the class of the negative he then puts: *unitas, simplicitas, immutabilitas, infinitas, immensitas, aeternitas*, in the class of the positive: *vita, scientia, sapientia, sanctitas, iustitia, veracitas, potentia, bonitas, perfectio*. [[Google](#)]

1360) [Lehrbuch der ev. Dogmatik 3, p. 452](#).

1361) Chemnitz, *Loci* I, 28.

this separation is necessary, because they think that the Son of God could have become man only after the relinquishment of his omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience.¹³⁶²⁾

Finally, with regard to all divisions of divine attributes, it is appropriate to note that they are incidental, that is, they need not involve any difference in doctrine, as long as the individual attributes are merely described from Scripture and not constructed from our human thoughts about God. We agree with Hönecke when he writes:¹³⁶³⁾ "It may sound unscientific that of the division here given [namely, the division into immanent and transitive properties] it is said only that it is most recommended. In fact, it stands that none of the most viable divisions can be shown to be true without contradiction." When Quenstedt divides the divine attributes into immanent and transitive ones and says of the immanent ones that they have nothing to do with divine acts (*non sunt ordinata ad aliquos actus*), this is not quite true already with respect to the attribute that Quenstedt names first among the immanent ones, namely, immensity (*immensitas*). The immensity comes into action, if not directly, then indirectly at the transeunt or transitive or acting attributes. The Augsburg Confession art. 1 rightly addresses "immeasurable power, wisdom, and goodness" as belonging to the three persons of divine majesty.¹³⁶⁴⁾ The division into negative and positive attributes is essentially based on a comparison of God with the creatures, which is present in it, when in the Scriptures, as we have seen, identical predicates such as: being, living, loving, etc. are said of God and of men. This classification gives us reason to ascend from human imperfection to divine perfection, or rather to worship before divine perfection, which is beyond all human comprehension. In this comparison, we must keep strictly within the limits of Scripture

1362) Thomasius, [Christi Person und Werk 2 I, p. 49 ff.](#) Cf. the further discussion of modern kenosis in the doctrine of the person of Christ, Vol. [II, 116 ff.](#)

1363) [Dogmatik II, 72.](#)

1364) Cf. a further elaboration on this point in the doctrine of Christ's person under the section: "All divine attributes find communicated to Christ's human nature," [Vol. II, 260 ff.](#)

and never forget the infinite distance between God and the creature. All attributes of God, no matter how they are classified, come to God in a unique way (*modo singulari*). We generally follow the classification into negative and positive attributes, without claiming a special preference for the same. — A preliminary remark should be inserted here before we present in the following a brief description of the individual divine attributes. It is to remember that all the divine attributes revealed in the Scriptures: Unity, Infinity, Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence, etc., would only be terrible for us sinful men if the Scriptures did not also reveal to us this attribute: God's free grace available through Christ's *satisfactio vicaria* against the whole sinful world. This attribute stands at the center of the whole Holy Scriptures, because to the whole Holy Scriptures scopus is Christ, the Savior of sinners, "who gave himself for all for redemption (ἀντίλutron υπέρ πάντων), that such things might be preached in his time." To the preaching of the attribute of God's grace, which is διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ present, the world still stands.

1365)

Negative attributes of God. ^

1. The unity of God. (*Unitas Dei.*) ^

All creatures can exist at least in several copies. Besides God, there can be no other. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament point to the unity of God to describe the majesty of God. Is. 43:10: "Understand that it is I. Before me no God was made, so after me there will be none." Especially emphatic Is. 45:5: אֲנִי יְהוָה וְאֵין עוֹד וְאֵין יְהוָה אֲחֵר [HEBREW]. 1 Cor. 8:4: Οὐδεὶς θεὸς ἑτέρος εἰ μὴ εἷς. This *unitas Dei* is to be known to God's people, and confessed in the world, Deut. 6:4: Hear, Israel, יְהוָה יְהוָה אֶחָד [HEBREW]. There is no objection to the fact that creatures are also called "god" in Scripture. Authoritative persons are called god because they have divine functions under God (*propter analogiam veram*, Ps. 82:6, compared with John 10:36: θεοί as much as πρὸς ὃν δ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐγένετο). The gods of the heathen are also called god because they are mistakenly ascribed existence and divine effects to themselves (*propter analogiam*

1365) 1 Tim. 2:6; Matt. 24:14.

fictam, Deut. 4:28: אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה יֶחְסֶה [HEBREW]). But Scripture itself sharply distinguishes between so-called gods (λεγόμενοι θεοί) and the one who is God by his essence, beside whom there is no other, 1 Cor. 8:5: the θεοί πολλοί are λεγόμενοι θεοί. Hence the emphasis on "alone," μόνος, 1 Tim. 6:15. 16: μόνος δυνάστης, ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλευόντων καὶ κύριος τῶν κυριευόντων, ὁ μόνος ἔχων ἀθανασία. God, then, is *ens summum*, sharing existence, agency, dominion, and prestige with no one. The gods of the heathen can do nothing, neither benefit nor harm (Is. 41:23), because they do not exist at all. The really existing creaturely gods, like the worldly authorities, can do something, but not without God. Therefore, in the Sunday church prayer, we pray that the one true God will preserve them in existence and function.

The unity of God has great practical significance. In the *unitas Dei* lies 1. the mighty admonition to adhere only to this one God, and that with an undivided heart (Mark 12:30; Deut. 6:5); 2. the great comfort that no one and nothing can harm us if God stands on our side, Rom. 8:31: Εἰ δὲ θεὸς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, τίς κατ' ἡμῶν;

Following the unity of God, we can also refer to the much discussed question whether a definition of God can be given or not. In answering this question, it all depends on what we understand by definition. If we understand by it the indication of a *genus*, to which the thing to be defined belongs, together with indication of the *differentia specifica*, by which the thing differs from others, which belong to the same *genus*, then a definition of God is impossible. Because there is no other or others besides God (οὐδεὶς θεὸς ἕτερος εἴη ἐς), the concept of genus is missing with respect to the concept "God," and thus the *differentia specifica* in relation to the *genus* also falls away. Baier therefore says very correctly:¹³⁶⁶⁾ *Definitionem exquisita sic dictam, non est, cur quis postulet et expectet*. ["There is no reason why one should demand and expect such a definition."] Gerhard:¹³⁶⁷⁾ *Deus non habet univocum aliquod genus cum reliquis entibus, nec simplicissima eius essentia ex genere et differentia est composita*. ["God has no unequivocal genus with other beings, nor is his most simple essence composed of genus and difference."] Gerhard's "*Deus non habet univocum aliquod genus cum reliquis entibus*" ["God does not have any kind of uniqueness with other beings"] is also applied to the popular "definition": *Deus est spiritus independens*. ["God is an independent spirit."]

1366) Comp., ed. Walther, II, 14.
§ 89.

1367) *Loci, L. De Nat. Dei,*

Very correctly Luther says:¹³⁶⁸) "Who knows what is called God? It is above body, above spirit, above all that can be said, heard and thought." Gerhard shows in reference to Jn. 4:24: "God is a spirit", that also in this passage "spirit" is not stated in the same sense (*univoce*) of God and the angels, *sed modo plane singulari, cum essentia infinita et finita, spiritus increatus et spiritus creatus plus quam toto genere differant* ["but in a very singular manner, with an infinite and finite essence, the uncreated spirit and the created spirit differ more than the whole genus"] — But if we do not take the expression "definition" strictly, but understand by it a description (*descriptio*), then we could at most speak of a definition of God. For, however, we can and should describe God, according to the attributes which He attaches to Himself in His Word, as the one, simple, unchanging, omnipotent, omnipresent, righteous, in Christ gracious God, and so on. Yes, we can appropriately call the whole revealed Word of God, that is, the whole Holy Scriptures, a description of God. Would to God that we would make diligent use of this description at all times! As for the expression "definition", we have never been able to make friends with it in our own person in the doctrine of God, but we keep it with those who say: *Deus non definiri, sed ex verbo suo revelato describi potest*. ["God cannot be defined, but can be described from his revealed word."]

2. The simplicity of God. (*Simplicitas Dei.*) [^]

By the simplicity of God we understand the characteristic according to which every kind of composition or the assumption of parts in God is to be rejected, because infinity belongs to God and infinity excludes all parts. It has been objected against the simplicity of God that the Scriptures ascribe to God members: eyes, mouth, hands, feet, and so on. This is certainly the case. Ps.. 139:16: "Your eyes saw me while I was still unprepared"; Is. 55:11: The word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God shall not return void; Ps.. 119:73: "Thy hand hath made me"; Matt. 5:36: "The earth is the footstool of his feet." But Scripture itself forces us to understand these expressions figuratively, as a condescension to human ideas ("anthropopathic"), when, in contrast to the external and corporeal, it says John 4:24: πνεῦμα ὁ θεός. Augustana, Art. I: "Without parts, *incorporeus, impartibilis*." To be rejected, therefore, is the

1368) [St. L. XX. 806.](#)

Anthropomorphism, as far as it transfers human corporeality to God.¹³⁶⁹) The idea of newer theosophists ([Ötinger](#), † 1782) of a spiritual body of God, which has condensed outward with the creation and through the creation of the world, is also to be rejected.¹³⁷⁰) Against the simplicity of God it must not be objected the multiplicity of the qualities, which the scripture ascribes to God, as: God is righteousness, God is mercy, God is omnipotent, etc. Of course, we men have to think of righteousness, mercy, omnipotence, etc. in God in succession and side by side. But we have already seen that in this way God divides Himself in His word-revelation, as it were, into "parts" or "matters" *propter intellectus nostri imperfectionem*, because we men can have no conception at all of a simple and infinite Being, "if we wanted to tear ourselves apart at once," as Luther says. This is the "piecemeal" knowledge (ἐκ μέρους) of which the apostle addresses 1 Cor. 13. But in God, the aforementioned and all attributes are the one indivisible divine essence itself. — With the unity and simplicity of God finally also the Trinity of the persons in God does not dispute, as all old and newer Unitarians claim. According to Scripture, the essence of God is not divided according to the three persons, but the whole Godhead is without division and multiplication, as in the Father, so also in the Son (Col. 2:9) and in the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4). — If one further objects that the difference between the persons in God is not merely a conceptual but a real difference, and that therefore the unity and simplicity of God appears to be abolished by the difference of the persons, then it must be said that we stand here before the mystery of the holy Trinity. We believe on the basis of the testimony of Scripture, that is, on the basis of self-revelation

 1369) [Luther](#) (1, 487) about the anthropomorphites: "If the thoughts of the anthropomorphites have been so coarse" ("that they have given the divine majesty the form of a man"), "then they have been rightly condemned; for there is a manifest error in it. 'For a spirit [which is God according to John 4:24] hath not flesh and bones.' But I am rather of opinion that I hold that the anthropomorphites thought how. they would like to pretend the doctrine to the simple in a simple form. For God is in his substance and essence quite unknowable and incomprehensible. Nor can we actually say what he is, if we wanted to tear ourselves apart right away."

1370) Cf. the quotation in [Baier-Walther II, 18. 19](#). Here the pantheistic conception of an emanation of the world from the being of God is present with the theosophists.

God in His Word, both the unity of God and the Trinity of persons (1 Cor. 8:4-6; Matt. 28:19). The subordinations, however, insofar as they let the Son be less than the Father and the Holy Spirit less than the Father and the Son and speak of a God in the second and third sense of the word, abolish the unity and simplicity of the essence of God and fall into polytheism.

3. The immutability of God. (*Immutabilitas Dei*.) [^]

While all creatures pass away, being changed like a garment (Ps. 102:27-28), it is said in the same place and in sharp contrast with regard to God: "But you remain as you are." And as unchangeableness is ascribed to God in His essence, so also in His attributes. Is. 54:10: "Mountains shall depart and hills shall fall, but my grace shall not depart from thee" and Jn. 3:36: "The wrath of God abideth upon him." Also of God's will it is said Prov. 19:21: "There are many counsels in a man's heart, but the counsel of the Lord standeth still." The immutability of God is used by Scripture both to warn the wicked (Mark 9:44: the fire that does not go out) and to comfort the pious, Is. 54:10: "My grace shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace fall away."

When Scripture ascribes a change of mind to God (God repented that He created mankind and made Saul king, Gen. 6:6; 1 Sam. 15:11), and also states a change of place of God (Gen. 11:5: "God came down"), this is done in order to accommodate our human ideas. That this change is not to be transferred to God's nature is taught by Scripture itself in such passages where God and man are contrasted, such as 1 Sam. 15:29: "God is not a man, that He should repent"; Jer. 23:24: "Do you think that someone can hide himself so secretly that I do not see him? Is it not I who fill heaven and earth?" "God enters into time, and space, without becoming temporal or spatial in His being."

From this it follows: Scripture speaks of God in two ways: a. of God in His majesty, as exalted above time and space (besides 1 Sam. 15:29 and Jer. 23:24 still Ps. 90:4: a thousand years before God as one day); d. of God as limited to human

conception of time and space, like 1 Sam. 15:11; 1 Mos. 11:5. Only after the latter way God is comprehensible for us men. We have to imagine God in such a way that the unchanging God is merciful or wrathful depending on the different objects. God is a gracious God to the humble, to poor sinners or broken hearts, whereas a wrathful God to the arrogant and self-righteous, 1 Petr. 5:5: "God resists the arrogant (υπερηφάνοις), but to the humble (ταπεινοίς) He gives grace"; Luke 18:9-14: Pharisees and tax collectors; Luke 1:52-53: "He pushes the powerful off their chairs and lifts up the humble; he fills the hungry with goods and leaves the rich empty."

If against the immutability of God the creation of the world and the incarnation of the Son of God is asserted, then it is to be said: By the creation of the world and by the incarnation of the Son of God no change is set in God, but in relation to the creature. If one thinks the creation of the world not according to the recipe of the pantheistic theosophists, but according to the Scriptures, the world is not an emanation from God or a part of God, but brought into existence by God's omnipotence from nothing. And if one thinks of the incarnation not according to the thoughts of modern kenotics, but according to the revelation in God's Word, the incarnation consists in the fact that the Son of God, without any change in His divinity, took into His person a human nature from the Virgin Mary.¹³⁷¹⁾

1371) Gerhard answers (*Locus De Nat. Dei*, § 154) to the question whether by the creation of the world and by the incarnation of the Son of God a change was set in God, so: *An creationis opus Deum fecerit mutabilem? Negatur. ... In creatione duo consideranda: 1. agendi principium, 2. effectum productum. Agendi principium est ipsa Dei essentia, cui per creationem nulla accessit mutatio, quia non novo voluntatis moto Deus in creatione aliquid voluit, quod prius ab aeterno voluit, sed in tempore id fecit, quod ab aeterno immutabili sua voluntate decreverat. In effecto producto est mutatio a non esse ad esse, sed hoc Deum ipsum non fecit mutabilem. — Idem est iudicium de quaestione: An incarnationis opus Deum statuit mutabilem? Affirmat Socinus in Defens. 'animadv. Posn., p. 66: "Quis negare poterit, si Deus tunc revera incarnatus est et homo factus, cum Christus Iesus de Spiritu Sancto in Mariae virginis utero conceptus est exque ea natus, ipsi Deo eiusque substantiae adventitium aliquid et novum, idque maximi momenti, accidisse?" Atqui mansit eadem Verbi υπόστασις, licet alterius naturae coeperit esse ὑπόστασις.*

[[Google](#)]

4. The infinity of God. (*Infinitas Dei*.) [^]

All creatures are finite, that is, they are subject to the limits or boundaries in relation to their being and their activities. When we say that God is infinite, we take the divine majesty from all limits of being in space and time and from all limits of activity. The scriptural statements about this are very certain. Scripture ascribes infinity to God a. according to His nature (Ps. 145:3: His greatness is unsearchable, לְגִדְלוֹתָי אֵין חֶקֶר [HEBREW]), b. according to the individual attributes (Ps. 147:6, literally, "His understanding is without number", לְחִבְיוֹתָי אֵין מִסְפָּר [HEBREW]). Thus, the attribute of infinity recurs with the individual divine attributes. God's knowledge is infinite, God's power is infinite, God's wisdom is infinite, as is to be explained further in the description of these attributes.

In so far as the infinite God cannot be taken as a measuring rod, the infinity of God is also called the immensity of God (*immensitas Dei*). By the immensity of God the Scripture reminds us also particularly that we men do not make our human thinking or comprehension capacity the standard of the divine being and doing. All Unitarians disregard this when they allow themselves the judgment that there could not possibly be three distinct persons in the one indivisible God. The Scriptures expressly say that God dwells in a light into which man cannot penetrate with his knowledge (1 Tim. 6:16), and that God's greatness is inscrutable (Ps. 145:3). Therefore, the Augustana, art. 1, adds to the "without end": "immeasurable power, wisdom and goodness." By emphasizing the immensity of God, Scripture also points to the distance that exists between God and all creatures. We men all too easily forget our limitations. We think of ourselves as "great." In order to reduce our greatness to the right measure, it says, for example, Is. 40:15-17, that the nations are like a drop in a bucket before God, like a little rod in the balance, like nothing (כְּאֵין נִיגָד [HEBREW]). By the attributes of infinity and immensity, conceived as sublimity above space, Scripture further defends against all thoughts as if God were enclosed by anything in the world. 1 Kings 8:27 says: "Do you also think that God dwells on earth?"

Behold, heaven and all the heavens may not provide for thee; how then shall this house [the temple at Jerusalem]?" ("May not provide for you", לא יכללך, [HEBREW: not contain you], grasp you, encompass you not.) It is a correct axiom taken from Scripture: God enters into space and time, but always remains above space and time. This comes to the further representation with the attributes of the omnipresence and the eternity of God.

5. The omnipresence of God. (*Omnipraesentia Dei*.) [^]

Man and all creatures are locally limited. To express that the attribute "omnipresent" belongs to God in a unique way, the dogmatists remind that the angels are not omnipresent either, neither the good nor the bad ones. Chemnitz writes: ¹³⁷²⁾ *Unus angelus est in Persia, alter in Graecia, Dan. 10:13.*

What Scripture says about the omnipresence of God can be summarized in this way in the face of multiform error: God is present to all creatures

a. according to His essence, not only according to His effect, as in the interest of a false Christology some Reformed have taught and also newer theologians teach.¹³⁷³⁾ Where God works, there he is also. God never works in *absentia*. Luther expresses this as follows:¹³⁷⁴⁾ "God does not send out officials or angels when he creates or sustains something, but all such things are the work of his divine power itself. But if he is to create and maintain it, he must be there and make and maintain his creature in the most essential as well as in the most essential. For this reason he himself must be in every creature in its innermost, innermost, around and around, through and through, below and above, in front and behind, so that nothing more present nor more inward can be in all creatures than God himself with his power." Thus the Scripture teaches when Jer. 23:24 God says of Himself: "Do you think that someone can hide himself so secretly that I do not see him?" says the Lord. Is it not I who fill heaven and earth?" That God sees everyone is

1372) *Loci* I, 39.

1373) Cf. on the doctrine of Christ's person [vol. II, 185 ff.](#)

1374) [St. L. XX, 804.](#)

justified here by the fact that God himself, not only his effect, fills heaven and earth and is therefore everywhere (אֵלֹהִים [HEBREW]). Likewise, Ps. 139:8: "If I lead to heaven, you are there. If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there also."

b. God is so present in all creatures that he remains at the same time outside of the creatures, that is, never becomes creature or a part of the creature. So inwardly is God present to all creatures that they alone have existence and efficacy in him (έν αντω), Acts 17:28: Εν αντω ζώμεν καί κινούμεθα καί έαμέν. Col. 1:18: Τά πάντα έν αντω συνέστηκεν. But in doing so, God remains at the same time as far outside the creature and divorced from the creature as the infinite is divorced from the finite. Axiom: *Deus nunquam in compositionem creaturarum venit*. ["God never comes into the composition of creatures."] Gerhard: 1375) *Deus est ubique praesens non συνεκτώς, ut comprehendatur, sed συνεκτικώς, ut comprehendat et contineat omnia*. ["God is everywhere present, not συνεκτώς, that he may be comprehended, but συνεκτικώς, that he may comprehend and contain all things."] With respect to the essential presence of God in all places and in all creatures attested in Scripture, it is well known that the question has been raised whether God is to be thought present even in unclean places. Luther, too, was prompted by Erasmus' "Diatrobe" to pronounce on the question. Erasmus did not want to deny the presence of God in unclean places, but thought that it could not be addressed before the people without offence.¹³⁷⁶ Luther responds,¹³⁷⁷ that while not unspiritual and hopeful chatterers, serious and pious pastors could speak "decently and sweetly" (*cum decore et gratia*) and "with great benefit" (*magno fructu*) about this subject before the people. He leads Erasmus *ad absurdum*. He recalls the fact that many holy martyrs were thrown into very unclean prisons, even into the cesspools. Now, if God's presence in unclean places were not to be spoken of, and therefore not to be thought of, then from *locus abominabilibus* the holy martyrs would not have been able to invoke God either, but would have had to wait with their invocation until they came to a decorated temple. But as far as the matter itself is concerned, namely God's essential presence even in unclean places, Luther points out

1375) *Loci, L. De Nat. Dei*, § 172.

1376) Cf. Erasmus' "Diatrobe," printed in German translation in the St. Louis edition of Luther's works, XVIII, 1605.

1377) *Opp.* V. a. VII, 141 sq. St. L. XVIII, 1700.

that it cannot be denied because the Scriptures testify, *Deum esse ubique et replere omnia* ["God is everywhere and fills everything"]. He who, like Erasmus, finds this annoying, has human, childish thoughts of God. He thinks of God as enclosed by the creatures, while all the heavens do not encompass him.

c. God is present everywhere without extension (*extensio*) or contraction (*rarefactio*), without multiplication (*multiplicatio*) or division (*divisio*). To address God as an extension etc. would only make sense if we were allowed to transfer the concept of space to God. But this is forbidden by the Scriptures, when God, besides being and working in the world, is ascribed at the same time the sublimity over the whole world and over all that is space, as 1 Kings 8:27: "The heavens and all the skies do not contain him" and Is. 66:1: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what then is the house that ye will build me, or what is the place where I shall rest?" One might well expect that, at least within Christendom, no one would think of ascribing local or physical extension to God. And yet it did. It has always been the concern of Zwingli, Calvin, and more recent Reformers that human nature or the body of Christ would not want to be large enough to serve as the *σώμα* of the whole fullness of the Godhead (Col. 2:9). Luther reassures Zwingli and fellow Reformers with the following words:¹³⁷⁸) "The proud, haughty spirit ... thus reveals his coarse foolish thoughts, since he does not think differently of God's being in all places, except as if God were a great, vast being, who fills the world and thoroughly towers over it. It is as if a straw bag were full of straw and still extended above and below, just according to the first bodily, comprehensible way. Of course, Christ's body would be a mere poem and ghost, as a big straw sack, since God would be inside with heaven and earth. Would this not be speaking and thinking roughly enough of God? But we do not speak in this way, but say that God is not such an extended, long, wide, thick, high, deep being, but a supernatural, inscrutable being, who is at the same time in every grain completely and yet in all and above all and apart from all creatures; therefore there must be no enclosure, as the spirit dreams. For

1378) [St. L. XX, 960 f.](#)

one body is much, much too wide for the Godhead, and there could be many thousand Godheads inside; again, also much too narrow that not one deity can be inside. Nothing is so small, God is still smaller; nothing is so large, God is still larger; nothing is so short, God is still shorter; nothing is so long, God is still longer; nothing is so wide, God is still wider; nothing is so narrow, God is still narrower, and so on it is an ineffable being above and apart from everything that can be named or thought." In the foregoing words of Luther, in contrast to foolish human thoughts, we have perhaps the most powerful description of the omnipresence of God found in any human writing since the time of the apostles.

To the description of the omnipresence of God still some special questions have followed. 1. Is there a space outside of the world? This question must be answered decisively in the negative. Space belongs to the world, is a creature of God like the world itself and does not extend beyond the world. Where the world ends, space also ends. The assumption of a space beyond the world would result in a *progressus in infinitum* and finally pantheistically identify God and the world. Where the world ends, there is God. According to Col. 1:17 the universe (τα πάντα) is not in space but in God (εν αὐτῷ, scil. θεῷ). Gerhard:¹³⁷⁹⁾ *Deus dat loco et rebus, quae sunt in loco, suum esse*. When Zwingli asserted at the colloquium at Marburg (1529) that every true body must exist spatially and in space, Luther reminded him that the world body (the universe) was a true body and yet not in space.¹³⁸⁰⁾ 2. Is a special approximation of the divine essence (*specialis approximatio essentiae divinae*) to be assumed in the case of special divine acts of grace and wrath? Quenstedt and others answer yes,¹³⁸¹⁾ Baier and others answer no.¹³⁸²⁾ On the basis of the scriptural passages which state the essential presence of God in the whole universe (Jer. 23:24), it is probably safer to agree with Baier. In the assumption of a *specialis approximatio secundum substantiam* there seems to be the danger that we transfer the concept of space (*extensio*) to God. But it is to be noted in any case

1379) *Loci, L. De Nat. Dei*, § 172.

1380) For more details, see the doctrine of Christ's person, [Vol. II, 204](#)

f.

1381) *Systema* II, 902.

1382) [Comp. ed. Walther II, 24 sqq.](#) Baier's dogma-historical exposition is very detailed.


and was also held by Quenstedt and Baier that not only God's gifts, but God Himself dwells in the believers (Jn. 14:23). The Lutheran church also explicitly rejects as contrary to Scripture in its confession¹³⁸³) "that not God, but only the gifts of God dwell in the believers". 3. What did God do before the creation of the world? Luther counts this question among the useless ones and refers to Augustine's answer: *Deum praeeparasse infernum curiosa scrutantibus* ["God has prepared a hell for those who search curiously"].¹³⁸⁴)

As for usus practicus, Scripture uses the omnipresence of God a. as a warning. Because God fills heaven and earth, there is no place where God does not see us (Jer. 23:24). No change of place takes us out of the realm of God's omnipresence (Ps. 139:9 ff: "Would I take wings of the dawn" etc.). Gerhard:¹³⁸⁵) *Saepius in tenebris ea committuntur, quae in praesentia honesti alicuius viri facere reformidaremus, at Deus ubique praesens est, quem nec latere quidquam nec fallere quisquam potest; qui ergo fit, quod illius praesentia non incutit nobis timorem et cautam sollicitudinem delicta vitandi*. [[Google](#)] b. For consolation. Ps. 23:4, "Whether I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me (אֶתְּךָ עִמָּדִי [HEBREW]). Matt. 28:20: "I am with you (εγώ μεθ' υμῶν) always, even to the end of the age." Gerhard:¹³⁸⁶) *Coniecti in squalorem et caliginem carceris ob nominis Christi confessionem, dicamus: Dominus mecum est, qui est illuminatio et salus mea*. Es. 43:1, 2: "Sic ait Creator tuus, o Iacob, et Formator tuus, o Israel: Ne timeas! Cum transieris per aquam, tibi adsum, et per flumina, ne inundent te, cum ambulas per ignem, non accendit te flamma." [[Google](#)]

6. The Eternity of God. (*Aeternitas Dei*) [^]

The word eternity is used in Scripture in a double sense.

In a weakened sense it stands for a long duration, not foreseeable to man, like the time of the Old Testament. According to Ex. 12:24 the children of Israel were to keep Passover עֲד־עֹלָם [HEBREW], and Gen. 17:3 calls circumcision בְּרִית עֹלָם [HEBREW, see Gen. 9:16]. Circumcision and Passover, however, were to last only until the time of the New

1383) [Formula of Concord. M. 624, 65](#) [[Trigl. 937, 65](#) , 1384) [St. L. I, 313](#).

1385) *Loci, L. De Nat. Dei*, § 189.

1386) *L. c.*

Testament. Circumcision was to be replaced by baptism and the Passover by the Lord's Supper.¹³⁸⁷⁾ In a weakened sense the word eternity stands furthermore for a duration, which is indeed without the border of the end, but not without the border of the beginning. Men and angels, as creatures of God, have a beginning. But not only the pious, but also the evil men remain in eternity by God's power.¹³⁸⁸⁾ The same is true of the good and evil angels.¹³⁸⁹⁾

In the proper or strict sense eternity denotes the unlimited duration without beginning and without end and therefore also without succession.¹³⁹⁰⁾ In this sense eternity belongs only to God and therefore serves to describe the divine majesty, as Gen. 21:33: עֶלְיוֹן [HEBREW]; Is. 40:28: עֶלְיוֹן יִצְהָר [HEBREW] Rom. 16:26: δ αἰώνιος θεός I Tim. 1:17: ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν αἰώνων. God is without beginning (Ps. 90:2: "before the mountains were, and the earth," etc.) and without end (Ps. 102:27: "heaven and earth will pass away, but you remain"). God's majesty over time or timelessness or abiding presence is expressed Ps. 90:4: "A thousand years are before you as the day that passed yesterday." God created time, but does not thereby become temporal, but accompanies time without being enclosed by time; just as God also created space or place and is present in all places, but does not thereby become spatial, but remains exalted above space.

Scripture also uses the eternity of God a. as a warning. There is an "eternal destruction (δλεῦρόν αἰώνιον) from the presence of the Lord" (2 Thess. 1:9).¹³⁹¹⁾ b. For comfort,

1387) Col. 2:11, 12; Matt. 28:19 — Matt. 26:26-28 (the blood of the New Testament, τῆς καινῆς διασῆκς).

1388) Matt. 25:46: ζωὴ αἰώνιος and κόλασις αἰώνιος.

1389) The good angels belong to the eternal heavenly family, Hebr. 12:22-24; Eph. 1:21. — The eternal fire, into which on the Last Day the wicked go, is *primo loco* there for the wicked angels, το πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον, τὸ ἡτοιμασμένον τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις ἀπὸν.

1390) This is the so-called absolute eternity, [Baier II, 27](#): *Aeternitas Dei, absolute sic dicta, significat existentiam seu durationem Dei permanentem sine principio et fine omnique successionem aut vicissitudine.* [[Google](#)]

1391) [Gerhard](#), *Loci, L. De Nat. Dei*, § 149: *O anima ad aeternitatem condita, exue amorem terrenorum et transitoriorum ac coelestia utpote.*

1 Thess. 4:17: "We will be with the Lord always" (πάντοτε). 2 Cor. 5:1: "We have a building, built by God, a house not made with hands, which is eternal, in heaven" (αἰώνιον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς).¹³⁹²

Positive attributes. [^]

1. Life. (Vita.) [^]

Creatures also have life. Paul says of himself and all men Acts 17:28: ζῶμεν, we live. But this is life dependent on God. Paul adds, "In him [God] we live," ἐν αὐτῷ ζῶμεν. To God alone independent life ("primordial life," "absolute" life) is due, John 5:26: ἐχει ζωὴν ἐν ἑαυτῷ. By calling God the "living God" (Jos. 3:10: יְיָ חַי [HEBREW]; Acts 14:15: ὁ θεὸς ὁ ζῶν), Scripture describes the one true God in His divine majesty, in distinction from the gods of the heathen (Acts 14:15; Jer. 10:10: "The Lord is a right God, a living God") and in distinction from all creaturely life, as He Himself "gives life and breath to everyone everywhere", Acts 17:25.

The fact that God is the "living God" is used by the Scriptures a. as a warning for all the godless (Hebr. 10:31: "Terrible, φοβερόν, it is to fall into the hands of the living God"), b. as a comfort for all the pious. The Old Testament covenant people are to experience that a "living God" is among them (Jos. 3:10). Thus it is also a characteristic of the New Testament church that as "the congregation of the living God" (1 Tim. 3:15) it places its hope in the living God (1 Tim. 4:10: ἠλπίκαμεν ἐπὶ ᾧ ζῶντι). Luther: "Vivit."

2. The Knowledge of God. (Scientia Dei.) [^]

The men also know something. The heathen know God's righteousness (το δικαίωμα τοῦ -θεοῦ, God's law, Rom. 1:32; the work of the law stands written in their hearts,

sempiterna imice desidera. ... Transit mundus, perit terra, pereunt omnia, quae sunt in ea, sed deterius perit, qui corde adhaeret terrenis et transitoriis.
[[Google](#)]

1392) Hollaz, *Examen, cap. I, De Deo, qu. 50*: Tremente diabolo et premente nos mundo erigamus mentes nostras spe aeternae gloriae. Nam momentanea levitas afflictionis nostrae iuxta excellentiam in excellentiam aeternum pondus gloriae operatur nobis; eo quod nos non spectamus ad ea, quae videntur, sed ad ea, quae non videntur; quae enim videntur, temporaria sunt; quae vero non videntur, aeterna. [[Google](#)] 2 Cor. 4:17-18.

Rom. 2:16). The Christians know that man is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ (Gal. 2:16). The angels, both good and evil, also know something. The devils know that there is one God, that Christ is the Son of God and that eternal torment is ahead of them (Jam. 2:19; Mark. 5:12; Matt. 8:29). The good angels know a lot. They know about the manifold wisdom of God (ἡ πολυποίκιλος σοφία τοῦ Θεοῦ) according to the purpose from the world, which He has proved (ἐποίησεν) in Jesus Christ our Lord (Eph. 3:10-11). With their willing and intelligent service they accompany the Christian church until the Last Day (Hebr. 1:14; 1 Petr. 1:12; Matt. 4:11; Luke 16:22; Matt. 13:30, 39, 49).

The knowledge of God differs from the knowledge of creatures

- a. by the extent of the knowledge, that is, by the fact that God knows all things (*omniscientia*, Jn. 21:17: πάντα αὐ οἶδας, 1 Jn. 3:20: ὁ Θεὸς γινώσκει πάντα), thus also the future things hidden from all creatures and known to Him alone (*praescientia*, Is. 41:22, 23: "Declare to us what will come hereafter, and we will know that you are gods"), including possible things (*scientia de futuro conditionata*, 1 Sam. 23:12: When Saul comes to Keilah, the citizens will deliver David to Saul; Matt. 11:23: "If the deeds had happened in Sodom that happened in you [Capernaum], it would still be standing today").¹³⁹³⁾

- b. By the way of knowledge. Since God is omniscient, with God there can be no address of a progression of knowledge from one object to another and from the known to the unknown (as is the case with men), but God knows all things in one simple act referring to all things. Furthermore, God knows all things directly, that is, God's knowledge is not conveyed by images of the objects or by impressions which are produced by the objects (*per species intelligibiles*), but God knows all things directly, as they are in themselves, in their inner essence.

1393) The Latin expressions for the divine knowledge of possible things are not exactly beautiful, especially if we add the expressions *scientia de futuribili*, *scientia media*. ["knowledge of the future, middle knowledge"] But what is said against the matter is not wisdom, but contradiction against the scripture, as is clear from the cited passages.

The ancient theologians say something like: *Deus res non per species intelligibiles, sed in se sive in esse proprio cognoscit. Homo res adspicit, Deus perspicit.* ["God does not know things through intelligible species, but in himself or in his own being."] Therefore, the Scripture says that God knows the thoughts of men, even if men do not make their thoughts known by external signs (words, works, gestures). God knows the heart of all the children of men (1 Kings 8:39): God is the heart-teller, ο καρδιογνώστης θεός (Acts 16:8). Christ sees (ιδών) the thoughts of men (Matt. 9:4); he knew what was in man (John 2:26).

What the Scriptures teach of the knowledge of God, they themselves use in manifold ways: a. for warning. We saw: it belongs to the description of the divine majesty that God alone knows the things to come (הַבְּאִזָּה [HEBREW]), Is. 41:22-23. All who go to soothsayers or ask the dead transfer God's glory to men and devils. They are an abomination to the land. Under the theocracy of the Old Testament they had to be eradicated from the land, Deut. 18:9 ff; Deut. 20:6, 27. Furthermore: Only God knows what is in God. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son, and to whom the Son wills to reveal it, Matt. 11:27. All who teach otherwise and do not stay with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 6:3), but instead of the words of Christ make their own "pious self-consciousness" or "experience" the source and norm of Christian doctrine, put themselves on God's teaching chair in God's house, and Scripture warns against them thus: "Do not obey the words of the prophets who prophesy to you! They deceive you, for they preach from the face of their heart and not from the mouth of the Lord," Jer. 23:16. Further, we all too easily forget the omniscient God in regard to our thoughts, words and works, with whom darkness is not dark, but the night shines like the day, Ps. 139:12. — But Scripture also uses the omniscience of God in manifold ways d. for comfort. God looks upon them that are of a broken spirit, and are afraid of his word, and delighteth to dwell with them with his grace, Is. 66:2; 57:15; Ps. 34:19; 51:19. And as for bodily need, Scripture reminds us that our heavenly Father knows what we need, Matt. 6:32. And when men wrong our righteousness, we may and should take comfort in the fact that God's eyes see the righteous cause," Ps. 17:1-3.

Question: how does God's infallible foreknowledge relate to the unconstrainedness of the human will? One argues: If there is an infallible foreknowledge of God, then everything must happen as God foreknew it. With this, however, the unconstraint of the human will and the human responsibility cease. On the basis of this argument heathens (Cicero),¹³⁹⁴ Socinians¹³⁹⁵ and also newer theologians¹³⁹⁶ either denied the omniscience of God completely or did not want to refer to the sinful actions of men.

What the Scriptures teach on this point can be summarized in the following sentences: 1. God's foreknowledge encompasses all things and is infallible. Everything happens as God has foreknown it. The contrary assumption nullifies the concept of God.¹³⁹⁷ 2. but the Scriptures do not represent the omniscience of God, which extends to all things without distinction, as acting or producing these things; rather, omniscience conceptually (*notionaliter*) presupposes the things which are its object or of which it takes notice as already existing. Thus, in the description of divine omniscience, Ps. 139:1-4, "Lord, thou searchest me and knowest me I sit or stand, thou knowest; thou understandest my thoughts afar off. I walk or lie down, you are around me and see all my ways. For, behold, there is not a word on my tongue that thou, Lord, knowest not all things." And when it is said of the congregation at Laodicea, Revelation 3:16, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot," this state of the congregation is represented as already existing, not as having been wrought by divine knowledge. Therefore, the Formula of Concord, in describing the divine omniscience, says quite correctly:¹³⁹⁸ "The providence of God (*praescientia*) also sees and knows evil beforehand, but not in such a way that it would be God's gracious will that it should happen.... The beginning and cause is not God's providence (for God creates

 1394) The quotations in Gerhard, *Loci, L. De Natura Dei*, § 248.
 1395) Sozinus, *Praei. Theol.*, c. 8-11: *Nulla ratio, nullum Scripturae testimonium proferri potest, ex quo aperte colligitur, Deum mala ex voluntatibus hominum dependentia scivisse, antequam fierent.* [[Google](#)]
 1396) Report in Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 459 f.
 1397) This is also stated by Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 459 f., against Socinians and newer theologians (Rothe, Weiße).
 1398) M. 705, 6. 7. [[Trigl.. 1065, 6-7](#)

and does not work evil, neither helps nor promotes it), but the evil and perverse will of the devil and of men." Likewise, the Epitome states:¹³⁹⁹ "The providence of God (*praescientia Dei*) is otherwise nothing, but that God knows all things before they come to pass." Conceptually distinct from the omniscience of God, which extends over both evil and good, is the knowledge, knowing, and cognizance of God, which relates only to certain objects and is described as setting or bringing forth His object, as Amos 3:2 states in reference to the nation of Israel: "Out of all the generations on earth I have known only you" (רַק אֶתְּכֶם יָדַעְתִּי [HEBREW]), and of the Galatians, Gal. 4:9, it is said that they were known by God (γνωσθέντες υπό θεον) when and in that God converted them. This is the so-called *nosse cum affectu et effectu*, or the "concise" use of the words "know," "recognize," etc."¹⁴⁰⁰

3. But even if we hold to the concept of mere divine foreknowledge without binding with it the concept of the effect or bringing forth of the things foreknown, thus saying with the Formula of Concord, "The providence of God is otherwise nothing, but that God knows all things before they come to pass," there still remains for our human apprehension a difficulty which we cannot remove. God's infallible foreknowledge, on the one hand, and the unconstrainedness of human will and human responsibility, on the other, are two truths that we must hold to on the basis of Scripture, without it being possible for us in this life to know how the two can coexist. If it stands firm — and it does stand firm — that everything happens as God has foreseen, then, in attempting to harmonize them in a rational way, we shall either, with Cicero, the Socinians, etc., abandon the infallible omniscience of God, or, with the Stoics, etc., reject the unconstrainedness of the human will and human responsibility for sin. Here only the way that follows the Formula of Concord helps. First, it emphasizes very firmly that everything certainly happens and will happen as God has foreknown. Secondly, it warns just as seriously against all brooding about what God, according to his omniscience,

1399) M. 554, 3rd [[Trigl. 833](#), 3 

1400) Cf. the further elaboration in the doctrine of eternal election, Vol. III, 550 ff.

may have foreseen with regard to us and others, because at this point we enter the realm of divine mysteries not revealed to us and therefore inscrutable to us. Instead, the Formula of Concord calls us to remain in the use of the means to which God has directed us in this life. It says:¹⁴⁰¹⁾ "There is no doubt that God most exactly and certainly foresaw before the time of the world, and still knows, which of those that are called will believe or will not believe; also which of the converted will persevere [in faith] and which will not persevere; which will return after a fall [into grievous sins], and which will fall into obduracy [will perish in their sins]. So, too, the number, how many there are of these on either side, is beyond all doubt perfectly known to God." Then it goes on to say, "However, since God has reserved this mystery for His wisdom, and has revealed nothing to us concerning it in His Word, much less commanded us to investigate it with our thoughts, but has earnestly discouraged us therefrom, Rom. 11:33ff, we should not reason in our thoughts, draw conclusions, nor inquire curiously into these matters, but should adhere to His revealed Word, to which He points us." Those who have tormented themselves with useless and dangerous musings about God's infallible foreknowledge, and have heard of others who were in the same hospital and were driven almost to despair, will follow the counsel of the Formula of Concord. Admittedly, this is not a "scientific" solution to the difficulty. But after all, it is more scientific to answer a question with *nescio* than to deceive oneself and others with an alleged solution or to continue hopeless voyages of discovery. Further, which belongs here, is to be explained with the doctrine of the divine providence and the eternal election.

Furthermore, the question has always been raised how, with regard to the omniscient God, for whom there is neither a past nor a future, one can speak of a foreknowledge (*praescientia*) at all. The answer can only be: God ascribes *praeseientia* to himself in his Word in contrast to the idols. Is. 46:10: "I declare beforehand what is to come afterward." This is done in condescension to our human capacity. Because we men cannot have any idea of the eternal indiscriminate "today",

1401) M. 715, 54 f. [[Trigl. 1081, 54 f.](#) 

but are bound with our addresses to the time or the succession, God condescends to our human power of comprehension and speaks in such a way of himself that his knowledge, in contrast to the human knowledge, also extends to the future things. Thus Luther and the dogmatists.¹⁴⁰²⁾

Particularly in the present time the question arises again and again, whether a foreknowledge of future things is not to be ascribed also to men and angels or spirits. The scripture denies this most decidedly by describing the foreknowledge, as we already saw, as belonging to the divine majesty and belonging to God alone. Then it still expressly denies *praescientia* to men and angels. The angels do not know the Last Day.¹⁴⁰³⁾ If men and angels in individual cases have known future things and have communicated them to men, then this happened as a result of a divine revelation which had been granted to them for these special cases.¹⁴⁰⁴⁾ What men say about the future always remains in the field of conjecture and

 1402) Luther to 1 Petr. 3:19. 20. St. L. IX, 1245 [Ed.- not in *Am. Ed.*]: "It goes (in the human life on earth) always from foot to foot successively up to the Last Day, but before God it stands all in one moment. For before him find a thousand years as one day." Therefore, Luther says, we on earth cannot comprehend this life (with God and before God). We men see things lengthwise, but God sees "by the way." Gerhard, Loci, L. De Nat. Dei, § 243: Quod praescientia Deo tribuitur, id iit respectu nostri; ipsi enim omnia sunt praesentia, quae nobis adhuc futura. Jn. Adam Osiander., *Colleg. Theol. I, 290: Ut in Deo non habet locum postscientia, etsi noverit praeterita, ita, accurate loquendo, sub futurorum in tempore cognitione Deo tribui non potest praescientia.* The division of divine knowledge according to the various objects stands in the service of God's gracious condescension to the weak human faculty of comprehension. At the same time, God takes care that we do not transfer the divine knowledge divided for us Pastors according to the different objects to God's being by describing Himself as being above space and time, Ps. 90:4, etc. Therefore the dogmatists, e.g. Gerhard l. c., say: Scientia Dei non inest ipsi per modum habitus essentiae superadditi, sed tribuitur ei ut purissimus actus ... una simplici intellectione, nec in tempore et cum motu, sed uno aeterno et immutabili intelligendi actu et uno momento omnia intuetur.

1403) Matt. 24:36. On Mark. 13:32 cf. vol. II, 180 ff.

1404) Thus the angel Gabriel, Luke 1:19: "I am Gabriel, who stand before God, and am sent to speak with you, that I may declare these things unto you." So also Daniel. He reveals to Nebuchadnezzar what is to happen in future times, but protests that this is to be ascribed to His wisdom, Dan. 2:27-28, 45.

calculation. The same applies to the devils when they allegedly reveal the future through "fortune tellers". The good angels, of course, don't put up with this blasphemous interference with God's prerogative.

3. The Wisdom of God. (*Sapientia Dei*). [^]

Scripture distinguishes knowledge and wisdom in God, Rom. 11:33: *ὁ βάθος πλούτου καὶ σοφίας γνώσεως Θεοῦ*). It is not well to say that here wisdom and knowledge are one and the same. Admittedly, it must also be stated here that in God all attributes are an indiscriminate unity, because all divine attributes are not parts or matters in God, but the one indivisible essence of God Himself. But because this indiscriminate unity is beyond our human comprehension, and because God Himself presents Himself to us in various attributes in His Word, we cannot but also distinguish between God's wisdom and knowledge, especially since at this point the *καί-καί σοφία* and *γνώσις* are both coordinated and distinguished.¹⁴⁰⁵⁾ Similarly, indeed, in the description of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, 1 Cor. 12:8, the *λόγος σοφίας* and the *λόγος γνώσεως* are distinguished as distinct in concept. By the word wisdom we think of knowledgeable cognition and action. This is how the word is used in Scripture. When Solomon wanted to build the temple and needed knowledgeable people to do it, he asked Hiram of Tyre, "So send me a wise Mann (*אִישׁ חָכָם* [HEBREW]) to work with gold, silver, brass, ... and who will know how to dig out with the wise men who are with me in Judah and Jerusalem." Thus Scripture also ascribes wisdom to God a. in regard to God's doing in the realm of nature whether the works of creation, Ps. 104:24: "Thou hast made them all in wisdom (*חָכְמָה* [HEBREW]))"; b. in regard to God's counsel and doing in the realm of grace. Thus 1 Cor. 2:6 ff. especially the gospel of Christ crucified is called *σοφία Θεοῦ*, which even the rulers of this world have not known, but which God has decreed before the world for our glory. Since now the Scripture still very strongly emphasizes that God is *μόνος σοφός*, wise alone,¹⁴⁰⁶⁾ to him a depth of wisdom unfathomable to us men,¹⁴⁰⁷⁾ thus is

1405) Against Tholuck in the commentary on this passage.

1406) 1 Tim. 1:17; Rom. 16:27. 1407) Rom. 11:33.

the *usus practicus*, that is, the consideration of God's wisdom, is very important for us. We men should admire and praise God's wisdom, not criticize it. We men, according to our natural God-estranged nature, are only too inclined to criticize God and all His works, and thus to place human wisdom above God's wisdom. Criticizing God has come to dominate in modern theology. Modern theologians criticize God primarily in two ways: a. by claiming of God's Word, the Holy Scriptures, that it is not truth but can be broken, b. by calling the divine method of redemption through the vicarious satisfaction of Christ (*satisfactio Christi vicaria*) too external, juridical, unethical, and harmful to virtue.¹⁴⁰⁸⁾ But in all Christians there still remains the tendency to criticize God, in that they often think, according to their flesh, that things are not right in the world. On the other hand, it stands unalterably from Scripture that things are always right in the world in every respect, not only as a whole but also in every detail. For everything that happens in the world remains in and under the expert hand of God (תְּחִלָּתוֹ [HEBREW: see 1 Kings 3:28], σοφία Θεοῦ). This also includes all the punishments that God causes to come upon men after the Fall, including wars, dear times, earthquakes, floods of water, etc.¹⁴⁰⁹⁾ All these punishments stand in the service of God's will of grace, which wants to lead men to repentance and faith in the Gospel, as Christ teaches us so emphatically on the occasion of concrete misfortunes.¹⁴¹⁰⁾

"Knowledge" and "wisdom" ^ are conceived by us as attributes of understanding. Thus Scripture expressly attributes understanding, νοῦς, to God, Rom. 11:34: τις ἐγνώ νοῦν κυρίου; and names σοφία and γνώσις as belonging to the νοῦς κυρίου. But Scripture also explicitly addresses a will of God. Thus 1 Tim. 2:4: πάντας ανθρώπους θέλει σωθῆναι. Jn. 6:40: "This is the will (θέλημα) of him who sent me, that whoever stands and believes in the Son may have eternal life." 1 Thess. 4:3: "This is the will (θέλημα) of God, your sanctification."

Before we describe the individual attributes that are to be understood as attributes

1408) Cf. [vol. II, 429 ff.](#), under the section: "More detailed description of modern theories of reconciliation."

1409) Gen. 3:16 ff; Matt. 24:1 ff. 1410) Luke 13:1 ff.

of God's will, a double question regarding God's will may be pointed out: 1) What stands in relation to the causes (*causae*) of the divine will? 2. what is to be thought of the divisions of the will of God?

What is to be said about causae voluntatis divinas may be summarized thus: a. Scripture describes God to us in His majesty, that is, as independent of all things apart from Him, that is, as unconditional or absolute, Rom. 11:36: ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα. In this relation, there is not cause and effect as two distinct things in God and in relation to God. Dogmatists express it thus: *Non sunt in Deo causae formaliter causantes* ["There are no formal causes in God"]. b. Because God in His majesty or as the absolute God is totally incomprehensible to us men, the Scriptures guide us and thus require us to distinguish cause and effect in God. According to Scripture, we humans must imagine God in such a way that, for example, God's wrath is caused by man's sin, Jer. 2:19: "It is the fault of your wickedness that you are thus beaten, and of your disobedience that you are thus rebuke." God's righteousness, on the other hand, is based on Christ's merit, Rom. 3:24: "We are justified without merit by His grace" διὰ τῆς ἀπολντρώσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦν. Dogmatists express it this way: *In Deo sunt causae virtualiter causantes* ["In God there are virtually causing causes"]. One may not find the dogmatic expressions very significant, but the matter is scriptural.¹⁴¹¹⁾

As far as the divisions of the divine will are concerned, it has to be remembered again that they have their reason in the limited human comprehension. In God the will is one and identical with God's essence. But according to God's self-revelation in His Word of God, we can distinguish:

1. God's first and second will (*voluntas prima* or *antecedens* and *voluntas secunda* or *consequens*). According to John 3:17, we must first imagine God clearly and determinedly as not wanting to condemn a single man, because He did not send His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. Then we are to imagine God clearly and definitely as condemning all who do not accept Christ, the Savior of sinners,

¹⁴¹¹⁾ A further elaboration on this point against more recent theologians who protest against a "Reorganization of God" is found in [Vol. II, 438, note 1041.](#)

because in the immediately following verse (v. 18) He says: "He who does not believe in the Son is already judged." The distinction between a first and second will in God has been misused in the interest of synergism from Chrysostom to our time,¹⁴¹²⁾ but it is founded in Scripture. It must be held against Calvinism, which from the outset makes God's will twofold in relation to the world of sin.

2. God's irresistible and resistible will (*voluntas irresistibilis* and *voluntas resistibilis*). No one can resist the will according to which Christ will gather all nations before his face on the Last Day. Behind this will stands a "must".¹⁴¹³⁾ The will, on the other hand, according to which Christ wants to gather men to Himself here in the world through the sermon of the Gospel and through the effect of faith, can be resisted. Matt. 23:37: "I have willed to gather you together, ... and ye would not." This distinction of God's will has also been misused in the past and especially in our time in the interest of synergism, by inferring from the *posse resistere* ["to be able to resist"] to a *posse assentiri* ["to be able to agree"] (*facultas se applicandi ad gratiam* ["the ability to apply oneself to grace"], self-determination, self-decision, etc.). But the division itself, as is clear from the scriptural words cited, is entirely scriptural.¹⁴¹⁴⁾

God wills without means and through means (*voluntas absoluta* and *voluntas ordinata*). At the wedding at Cana Christ works wine without the usual means by which wine is made, Jn. 2:1-11. In reserve cases God also works without means in the kingdom of grace, as can be seen in Luke 1:15 (John was already filled with the Holy Spirit in the womb). On the other hand, it is God's order to which He has bound us men that He works faith, preservation in faith, sanctification, etc.-only through the means of grace He has ordered (Word of God and the sacraments).¹⁴¹⁵⁾ Enthusiasm in its manifold forms is a perversion of the divine order, and the calling in Luke 1:15 is an abuse of this passage.

1412) This is further explained in [Vol. II, p. 38 ff.](#)

1413) Jn. 5:28; Matt. 25:31 ff; 2 Cor. 5:10 (δεῖ).

1414) The further exposition [vol. II, 557 f. 569 ff.](#)

1415) Rom. 10:17; Tit. 3:5; 1 Petr. 1:23 ff; Mark. 16:15; Matt. 28:19-20

etc.

4. God wants unconditionally through human performance and conditionally through human performance (*voluntas gratiae* and *voluntas conditionata*). God wants the salvation of men absolutely through human performance."¹⁴¹⁶ All those who want to insert a human performance here attain the curse, Gal. 3:10. But whoever wants to be saved by the way of the law, should not forget that God's will of the law is conditioned by a perfect fulfillment of the law; the man who does it will live by it.¹⁴¹⁷

5. God's will is revealed and unrevealed in God's Word (*voluntas revelata* and *voluntas abscondita* or *voluntas signi* and *voluntas beneplaciti*). Christians know God's will; they know what is given them by God, judge all things, know Christ's mind (νοῦν Χριστοῦ εἰδόντες), 1 Cor. 2:12, 15-16. In contrast, Rom. 11:33-34: No one has known the Lord's mind. In the question of their salvation, men are to be referred only to the will of God revealed in Christ. This is taught in all passages of Scripture where God can only be known and wants to be known in Christ, Jn. 1:18; Matt. 17:5; Jn. 6:40. But Christ invites all men to receive salvation from Him, Matt. 11:28.¹⁴¹⁸ One has addressed an act of violence,¹⁴¹⁹ when Luther on the one hand distinguishes between the revealed and the hidden will of God, and on the other hand expects men to completely ignore the hidden will in the question of salvation and to only adhere to the revealed will. On the other hand, it must be said that not only Luther, but the Holy Scriptures teach this distinction (1 Cor. 2:12, 16:16; Rom. 11:33-34), and not only Luther, but the Holy Scriptures already turn our eyes away from the hidden will by calling it inscrutable, Rom. 11:33: ὡς ἀνεξεραύνητα τὰ κρίματα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνεξίτηλα οἱ ὁδοὶ αὐτοῦ.

The attributes of God's will are understood to be God's holiness, righteousness, truthfulness, power, goodness, mercy, love, grace and longsuffering.

1416) Rom. 3:28 (χωρίς ἔργων νόμον); Eph. 2:10 (τὴ γὰρ χάριτί ἐστε σεσωσμένοι); Rom. 11:6 (εἰ δὲ χάριτι, οὐκ ἐστὶν ἐξ ἔργων).

1417) Gal. 2:12; 3:10 etc.,

1418) The more detailed explanation [Vol. II, 42 ff.](#)

1419) So also Karl Hase, *Ev. Dogmatik* 3, p. 295.

a. The Holiness of God. (*Sanctitas Dei.*) [^]

God's holiness first denotes God's majesty, according to which God is exalted above all created things. Thus in the "thrice holy", Is. 6:3: קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת [HEBREW] where by the קְדוֹשׁ [HEBREW] God is described as the set apart One, who indeed pervades and fills all things, but yet remains exalted above all created things, who sits on a high and lofty throne (כֶּסֶד [HEBREW]) and before whom the seraphim cover their faces and feet. In the New Testament the קְדוֹשׁ [HEBREW] is rendered δόξα θεοῦ, John 12:41: "Such things said Isaiah, when he saw his glory, and spake of him." Taken in this sense, the holiness of God comprehends all the other attributes of God in itself¹⁴²⁰⁾ and "the Holy One of Israel" stands in factual parallelism with the "God of Israel" as the one true God apart from whom there is no other, Ps. 71:22: "I thank thee, my God; ... I praise thee, thou Holy One of Israel." The holiness of God then also specifically grasps in itself the contrast to the sin of man, 1 Petr. 1:16: "You shall be holy, for I am holy" (quoting from Deut. 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7 etc.).¹⁴²¹⁾ This contrast of God's holiness to man's sin is also expressed in Is. 6 when the prophet is reminded of his own and the people's sin upon beholding the glory of God, v. 5: "Then said I, Woe is me, I perish; for I am of unclean lips, and dwell among a people of unclean lips!" — The *usus practicus* of God's holiness revealed to us is that on the one hand we approach God with great reverence,¹⁴²²⁾ yet on the other hand we approach Him with great joy and confidence because we are reconciled to Him through the death of His Son and have peace with Him through faith in Christ's *satisfactio vicaria*.¹⁴²³⁾

b. The Righteousness of God. (*Iustitia Dei*) [^]

The Scripture attributes righteousness to God and negates injustice in relation to Him, Ps. 92:16 [15], "Righteous is God, my rock, and there is no injustice in him" (יֵשׁוּר יְהוָה צְדִיק וְלֹא-עֲלֹתָהּ בּוֹ) [HEBREW]). Even more

1420) So correctly also in [Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 399.](#)

1421) What more recent theologians have said about the holiness of God can be found compiled and evaluated in Eduard König, *Theologie des Alten Testaments, kritisch und vergleichend zusammengestellt.* 1922, p. 171 ff.

1422) Gen. 18:27 etc. 1423) Rom. 5:1 ff; 5:10; Eph. 3:11, 12.

the justice predicates are clustered Deut. 32:4: הַצֹּדִיק הַיָּשָׁר כִּי כָל-דִּרְכָיו מִשְׁפָּט אֵל אֲמִנָּה וְאֵין עָוֹל צִדִּיק וְיָשָׁר הוּא: [HEBREW — out of order], In regard to the righteousness of God, there is a special difficulty for our human imagination. Men are justified, if they correspond to the divine standard standing above them. Above God, however, is no one and nothing. Therefore we must say: *Deus iustus est, quia omnia suae legi conformiter vult atque facit* ["God is just, because he wills and does everything according to his law."]. Rightly scholastics have said of God, and Luther repeats this, that God is "*exlex*" [outside the law]. Luther: "God issues the law, but he does not take it up again." 1424)

The righteousness of God, in relation to men, is a. *iustitia legalis*; that is, the righteousness of God revealed in the law of God; b. *iustitia evangelica*; that is, the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel. The *iustitia legalis* is *legislatoria*, inasmuch as it is for men the norm of their being and acting, and requires of men conformity to this norm, Matt. 22:34. This *iustitia* is then further *remuneratoria*, insofar as it rewards the good, and *vindicativa* (*punitiva*, *ultrix*), insofar as it rebukes the evil, 2 Thess. 1:4-10. — The *iustitia evangelica* is the opposite of the *iustitia legalis* and consists in the fact that God, forsaking his *iustitia legalis*, χωρίς νόμου, declares sinners justified by forgiving their sins out of grace for the sake of Christ's righteousness, Rom. 3:21-22: χωρίς νόμου δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ πεφανέρωται, δικαιοσύνη δε θεοῦ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

1424) Cf. Luther's sermon on Ex. 9:16, St. L. XII, 811 ff. [*sic* [St. L. III, 811 f.](#) not XII] Here Luther states that everyone loses God, cancels the concept of God, makes an idol out of God, which puts him under the "general idea of the good", as it was spoken in modern times. Rather, it is to say that the idea of the good sees under God. A few sentences from Luther's sermon may be quoted here: "Man is called pious when he acts and lives according to the law. With God it is even reversed; a work is called good because God does it." "This you must leave out of your head, if you want to give up the address of God, that you give no law or measure to God; for he is not a creature, he is immeasurable. A measure is set for man; I shall do so and so. ... Since thou also wouldest deal thus with God, thou hast erred from God." "God has no measure, law or purpose, as I said, therefore He cannot do contrary to it, He cannot sin against law, because none is presented to Him." Prov. 16:4: "The Lord does all things for His own sake," לַפְעֻלָּה [HEBREW]. By the way, *exlex* is not "church Latin", but belongs to the "classical" usage, as everyone can convince himself from the larger Latin Lexicon.

The salvation of men is based on the *iustitia evangelica*, and the essence of Christianity is faith in this *iustitia evangelica*. To the question: Does God adequately punish sin according to his *iustitia vindicativa*? the answer of Scripture is: Yes! Gal. 3:13; Jn. 3:36 etc. From the passages cited it is clear that Christ was adequately punished in the place of man, and that everyone who does not accept the punishment paid by Christ must eternally pay himself.

c. The Truthfulness of God. (*Veracitas Dei*.) [^]

God is little believed by men, and this unbelief is shown both to God's threats in the law and to God's promises in the gospel. Regarding the threats of the law it is said in Ps. 90:11: "But who believes that you are so angry?" and regarding the promises of the gospel Is. 53:1 and Jn. 12:38: "Who believes our sermon?" Because God wants men to believe Him in order to save them from eternal damnation, He condescends in His Word to the assurance that, unlike men who are liars, He is true and does not lie, Rom. 3:4: ὁ Θεὸς ἀληθής, πᾶς δὲ ἄνθρωπος ψεύστης. Scripture gives a bad report to all men without exception in regard to their truthfulness. It does call individual peoples and persons paragons in lying, e.g. the Cretans, Tit. 1:12, but that the whole human race is no better at the bottom of the natural heart, Christ Himself says Matt. 16:19, when among the things that proceed from the human heart (Ἐκ τῆς καρδίας Εξέρχονται) he mentions also πενδομαρτυρίαι and βλααφημίαι; hence Ps. 116:11: "All men are liars." To this general human deceitfulness Scripture powerfully and often contrasts the absolute truthfulness of God, Tit. 1:2: ὁ ἀψευδὴς Θεός; Jn. 3:33: ὁ Θεὸς ἀληθής; Hebr. 6:18: ἀδύνατον ψεύσασθαι Θεόν. Cf. 1 Sam. 15:29: יְהוָה אֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יָנֻס וְלֹא יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה [HEBREW], Lev. 23:19: אֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יָנֻס וְלֹא יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה [HEBREW]. Matt. 24:35: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away"; Jn. 10:35: "The Scriptures cannot be broken." *Usus practicus*: the absolute truthfulness of God in his wrath and in his grace should startle men both from their security (Gal. 6:7: "Do not be deceived, God does not allow himself to be

mocked!") as well as to provoke faith in God's promises of grace (Rom. 10:11: "He who believes in me will not be put to shame"; Tit. 1:2: "Eternal life has promised ὁ ἀγενδὴς θεός).

d. The Power of God, (*Potentia Dei*.) [^]

God's power differs from the power of creatures by the manner and by the extent of its working. Regarding the manner we have to say: *Deus producit volendo* ["God produces by willing"].¹⁴²⁵⁾ Example Gen. 1:3: "Let there be light! And there was light." *Deus creat per* עָרָא [HEBREW]. God's will is God's power. Ps. 115:3: "Our God is in heaven; all that He wills He makes" (הַיְיָ עֹשֶׂה כְּרִצּוֹנוֹ לֵאלֹהֵינוּ [HEBREW]). With regard to the circumambulation of power, Matt. 19:26: *παρὰ θεῶ πάντα δυνατά ἐστίν* and Luke 1:37: *οὐκ ἄδυνατήσῃ παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ πᾶν ῥῆμα* (*omnipotentia Dei*). We are therefore not to address God as if God had exhausted Himself in what was actually created and could not create any more (pantheists, pantheizing theologians, and rationalists). — On the other hand it is to be remembered also with the quality of the omnipotence of God that we men may not allow ourselves from the same any conclusions on God's real doing. What God really wants to do according to His omnipotence, we must learn from God's revealed Word. We must not allow ourselves to say, Because God is omnipotent, he forgives sin without Christ's *satisfactio vicaria*; for according to his revelation in the Word he forgives sin διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (Rom. 3:24). — What God wills He works in two ways: either by means ordered by Himself (*causae secundae*), or without the same. In the former case we speak of ordered power (*potentia ordinata*), in the latter of absolute power (*potentia absoluta, immediata*). Here, however, it is to be noted that in both cases the one almighty power of God is operative; e.g., that God sustains men by food in the order of nature is no less a work of divine omnipotence than when God sustained Moses for forty days without food or drink, Ex. 34:28. "Thou feedest us from year to year."¹⁴²⁶⁾

If God works what he usually does by *causae secundae* even without them, we speak of miracles on the basis of Scripture, John 2:11: σημεῖα; Acts 2:43: τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα.

1425) So correctly also in [Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 456](#).

1426) St. L. hymnal, hymn 339, 8.

With regard to miracles we have to note two things: 1. God can turn the *potentia ordinata* into a *potentia absoluta* at any time, that is, what he usually works through *causae secundae*, he can also work without them (Ex. 34:28: Moses's preservation without food and drink). As doctrine this is pronounced by Christ Matt. 4:4: "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that passes through the mouth of God." "Immutable laws of nature" do not exist in reality, but only in the minds of incomprehensible rationalists. The "laws of nature" are God's will related to creatures. 2. We men should keep to the means ordered by God and leave the strange things to God. Besides, it must be admitted that there is a belief in miracles (*fides heroica*) for which no rules can be established. The one who has faith in miracles is sure of his cause. He does not merely try to do miracles, but actually does them."¹⁴²⁷) The objection that God is not omnipotent because he cannot die, lie, steal, etc., is not based on spiritual contestation or desire for instruction, but on willfulness to create conceptual difficulties. The objection is based on sophistry, namely on a denial of the concept of God. It belongs to the atheistic scoffers and does not deserve the detailed refutation that some older theologians also give it. *Sunt sophismata, quibus definitio rei tollitur* ["There are sophistry by which the definition of a thing is removed"]."¹⁴²⁸)

e. God's goodness, mercy, love, grace, longsuffering. *Bonitas, misericordia, amor, gratia, longanimitas, patientia Dei.*) ^

It is advisable to treat these attributes under one heading, because they belong closely together in terms of content.¹⁴²⁹) As far as God's goodness is concerned, we can distinguish an objective and a subjective goodness in God on the basis of Scripture with the dogmatists. Taken objectively, God's goodness denotes His absolute goodness. Matt. 19:17: "No one is good but the one God".

1427) Cf. Luther, [St. L. XI. 957](#). Walther, Pastorale, [p. 294](#).

1428) [Scherzer](#), *Systema*, p. 55: *Si enim Deus mentiretur, moreretur, peccaret, Deus non esset; si creatura infinitam perfectionem haberet, creatura non esset; si praeteritum non praeteriisset, praeteritum non esset; si dies crastina hodie existeret, hodie non esset.* [[Google](#)]

1429) This is also correctly pointed out by [Nitzsch-Stephan](#), [p. 472 f.](#)

(ονδεῖς ἀγαθός ἐι μὴ εἷς, ὁ θεός). Scripture, to be sure, also calls creatures good, not only before the fall (Gen. 1:31: "God looked at all that he had made, and behold, it was very good"), but also after the fall (1 Tim. 4:4: παν κτίσμα θεοῦ καλόν). But creatures are good only insofar as they are God's work or God's creatures. In contrast, with respect to God, we must hold that, as distinct from creatures, He alone is good, namely, good in Himself and of Himself (το αὐτοαγαθόν). God's being good coincides with the concept of absolute perfection. Gerhard says: *Deus est vere bonus et solus bonus et omnis bonitatis causa* ["God is truly good and the only good and the cause of all goodness"].¹⁴³⁰ That God alone is good and creatures are good only *dependent* *a Deo vel communicative* is not a barren thought but an exceedingly important truth for the Christian life. This truth preserves us both from pride, when we see gifts in ourselves that others do not have, and from envy, when we perceive gifts in others that have not been bestowed upon us. Pride and envy are, according to Scripture and experience, the great disturbers of peace in church and state. Hence the admonition 1 Cor. 4:7: "What do you have that you have not received?" 1 Pet. 2:1: "Take therefore away all malice ... and envy." Gerhard reminds us that it is through envy that we become "God-fighters." [A Deo omnia in nos et proximum nostrum descendunt bona; qui proximo invidet, Deo ipsi, donorum largitori, adversatur ac vere est θεομάχος](#).¹⁴³¹

But the Scriptures describe God not only as good in Himself or as objectively good, but as good in His disposition and in His conduct toward creatures. In this respect we can speak of a subjective concept of God's goodness. Quenstedt explains the expression *bonitas relativa*¹⁴³² and adds by way of explanation, "God's goodness is such an attribute according to which God proves himself good and beneficent toward all creatures" (*sese bonum et beneficium ostendit*). The goodness of God toward all creatures is abundantly addressed in Scripture. Ps. 145:9: "The Lord is kind to all (טוֹב־יְהוָה לְכֹל) [HEBREW]) and has mercy on all his works."

1430) *Loci, L. De Nat. Dei*, § 208. Gerhard elaborates on this in numerous quotations from the Church Fathers. [Baier, Comp. II, 44](#): *Bonitas Deo competit absolute et in se, quae est ipsa eius perfectio seu essentia Dei, quatenus in se continet omnes perfectiones*. [[Google](#)]

1431) *L. De Nat. Dei*, § 215. 1432) *Sysstema I*, 418.

Jonah 4:11 laments God also of the many animals of Nineveh. Ps. 36:7: "Lord, you help both man and cattle" (יְהוָה [HEBREW]). This is where the whole 136th Psalm belongs, which also describes the individual works of God in the kingdom of nature with the refrain: "for His goodness (יְהוָה [HEBREW]) endures forever." Therefore also Ps. 148 all creatures are called upon to sing a great Hallelujah. In particular, however, Scripture ascribes goodness to God toward men, and specifically toward men insofar as they are sinners. In order to present God's goodness toward the world of sinners in a comprehensive light, it is described in Scripture in a series of expressions that are synonymous in substance but different in concept. These are namely the expressions mercy, love, grace, patience and long-suffering. Mercy describes the goodness of God as compassion for the misery into which men have fallen through sin, Luke 1:78-79: By the hearty mercy of God (διὰ σπλάγχνα ἐλέους Θεοῦ) the rising from on high (Christ) has visited those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. The love of God expresses that God's heart is attached to the sinful world in order to bring it back into His blessed fellowship. Jn. 3:16: "So God loved the world" (the whole world of sin) "that he gave his only begotten Son." God is philanthropist, Tit. 3:4: φιλανθρωπία. Luther, "philanthropist." The grace of God especially emphasizes that God's goodness (χρηστότης) toward sinners is not deserved by them in any way, but is in God's heart only for the sake of Christ's *satisfactio vicaria*. Tit. 3:5: "Not for the works of righteousness which we had done," but Rom. 3:24: δωρεάν ... διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρόσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. The words patience and longsuffering reveal to us that God waits for the repentance and conversion of sinners and does not strike immediately as they deserve: 1 Pet. 3:20: the 120 years of waiting before the Flood; 2 Pet. 3:9: the delay of the final judgment because God μακροθυμεῖ εἰς ὑμᾶς, μὴ βουλόμενός τινος ἀπολέσθαι; Ex. 34:6: God's sermon about Himself: אֶפְרַיִם יְהוָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ רַחוּם וְרַחוּם [HEBREW].

From the attributes of the goodness of God should also be found a reflex

 1433) Detailed description of the attributes mercy, love etc. in their unity and diversity [vol. II, 5 ff](#), under the section "Concept of saving grace".

in God's children. Luke 6:36: "Be merciful, as your Father is merciful." 1 Thess. 4:9: "You yourselves have been taught by God to love one another." Matt. 6:44. 45: "Love your enemies, ... so that you may be children of your Father in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good." Eph. 4:32: "Forgive one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." Col. 3:12: "Put on as the elect of God ... bowels of mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, patience" (μακροθυμίαν). A reflection of God's goodness and mercy toward the senseless creatures is also to be found in the children of God. Prov. 12:10: "A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast, but the heart of the wicked is unmerciful."¹⁴³⁴⁾

Objected to God's goodness, mercy, etc. are the destructions that confront us in the realm of nature and in the world of man. But these destructions stand in the service of God's saving love, because they are divine exhortations to repentance for all men, Luke 13:35: Ἐάν μὴ μετανοήτε πάντες ὁμοίως ἀπολείθε. Therefore, we gather for penitential services after such disasters as the earthquake in San Francisco and the tornado in St. Louis. That the world remains unrepentant in these exhortations to repentance is God's complaint Is. 1:5: "What further shall we strike at you, if you only do more of the revolt?"

In conclusion, we should again point out the unique position that God's goodness or grace in Christ occupies among all the other attributes revealed in Scripture. The revelation of this attribute is the very scopus of the whole revelation of God in Scripture. The Scriptures reveal Christ, the Savior of sinners. Christ in His work of reconciliation is the grace of God turned toward the world of sinners, John 3:17: "God did not send His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." The forgiveness of sins for the sake of Christ is the scopus also of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, as we see from Acts 10:43: "Of this

 1434) Christians should therefore not become members of the customary "Bands of Mercy" because they are already merciful to animals as Christians. By joining such and similar associations, they would be issuing a *testimonium paupertatis* to Christianity, that is, they would be doing a disgrace in the eyes of the world.

[Jesus] all the prophets testify that through his name all who believe in him shall receive forgiveness of sins." The revelation of all the other attributes of God would be of no use to us men, because we are sinners, but only terrible, if the Scriptures did not also contain this revelation: the one, indivisible, immutable, infinite, omnipresent, eternal, living, omniscient, omniscient, holy, just, true, and omnipotent God is the God who is gracious in Christ — gracious because God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself through Christ's *satisfactio vicaria*. "All sin thou hast borne, else we must despair." Therefore, we must see to it that we do not disfigure God's grace in Christ. This is done in a very crude way on the part of Rome by the openly and principally presented works doctrine and by the explicit cursing of the Christian truth that we have a gracious God through trust in the divine mercy in Christ.¹⁴³⁵⁾ Within the papal church, God's graceful face in Christ is transformed into a face of anger and judgment. Luther confesses that he was more afraid of Christ than of the devil under the influence of the Roman doctrine of works. In a more subtle way, God's appearance of grace in Christ is disfigured and actually transformed into an appearance of wrath and judgment by all so-called Protestants who make the attainment of God's grace and salvation dependent on *aliquid in homine*, such as the synergists of all times and especially the newer theologians, insofar as they deny the *satisfactio vicaria*.¹⁴³⁶⁾ Even those Christians who know the true doctrine of God's grace in Christ and who confess it when asked, not infrequently disgrace God's grace in their personal practice. This happens, for example, when they judge God's gracious attitude toward them not according to the objective Word of God, but according to their subjective feelings.¹⁴³⁷⁾ Finally, at the end of the doctrine of God, it should be pointed out that all deniers of the Holy Trinity do not know God's graciousness at all.

 1435) Cf. the section "The Papal Church and the Doctrine of Justification," [vol. II, p. 667 ff.](#)

1436) Cf. the section "Recent Protestant Theology and the Doctrine of Justification," [Vol. II, pp. 670 ff.](#)

1437) Cf. the section "The Denial of the Means of Grace in the Personal Practice of Christians," vol. III, 154 ff.

[The triune God](#) is the gracious God, as has been extensively demonstrated. If the Holy Trinity is denied, Christ is not the eternal Son of God, if the eternal Son of God did not become man in the fullness of time, there is no *satisfactio vicaria*, no becoming righteous by faith, by which we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, but we remain under the obligation and the curse of the divine law.

The creation of the world and man. [^](#) (*De Creatlone*)

1. The source of knowledge of the doctrine of creation. [^](#)

Because no man was a spectator at the creation, we have to rely only on the account God Himself published in the Scriptures for an authentic account of the creation. The *πάσα γραφή θεόπνευστος* 2 Tim. 3:16, and the *ἡ γραφή οὐ δύναται λυθῆναι*, John 10:36, of course also refers to the creation account Gen. 1 and 2. It is true that we men can recognize afterwards (*a posteriori*) that all things are created by God, because the creatures bear the divine stamp, Rom. 1:20 (God's invisible essence, that is, His eternal power and Godhead, is clearly seen [*καθοράται*] in the creation of the world by being perceived through the creatures). But with respect to the closer circumstances of creation (e.g., with respect to the time period and order of creation), we depend on God's revelation in Scripture. If we humans take the liberty of correcting God's creation report by drawing conclusions from the present condition of the world (geology), then this is an unscientific cleverness that is neither appropriate for Christians nor for humans in general. The disagreement z. V. concerning the age of the earth and the human world among the geologists of subject is also actually so great that one can address from "fixed results" of the geology only after one has completely renounced the use of the reason

which has remained to us after the fall. While some are satisfied with a few millennia beyond the real age of the earth and the human world, others demand almost uncountable millions of years.¹⁴³⁸⁾

2. Nature and Concept of creation. [^]

In contrast to the pagan pantheism, according to which the world is an outflow from God, that is, God himself (emanatism), and in contrast to the pagan dualism, according to which one assumes an eternal matter (νλη, νλη άμορφος, το μη δν) fashioned into the world (κόσμος) by the Godhead (ο νους, το δν),¹⁴³⁹⁾ the Holy Scriptures teach that the Triune God created all that is apart from God, the universe, from nothing by His mere will. The "nothing" is not to be understood as substance, *nihil positivum* (Plato's μη δν, chaos), but as real nothing (*nihil negativum, materiam excludens*), because according to Gen. 1:1 before the creation of the world there was nothing at all apart from God. "In the beginning," בְּרֵאשִׁית [HEBREW], means when things began to be apart from God. According to Scripture, God, as distinct from things apart from God, has no beginning. This is expressed especially emphatically Ps. 90:2: וְיַמְעוֹלָם עַד-עוֹלָם אֲתָה אֵל בְּתָרָם | הָיִים יִלְדוּ וְיַתְהוֹלֵל אֲרָץ וְיַתְהוֹלֵל [HEBREW] Likewise Col. 1:17: αὐτός ἐστι προ πάντων. However, for men it is true: *De nihilo nihil fit* ["Nothing happens out of nothing"], but not for God. Rather, of God applies Rom. 4:17: καλοῦντος τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς ὄντα.

According to this, the creation of the world from nothing is a characteristic of God."¹⁴⁴⁰⁾

1438) Cf. about the disagreement among the geologists [Luthardt, Apologie I, 68 ff.](#), although Luthardt himself makes almost throughout unseemly concessions. In our own publications, this subject has often been treated, e.g. [L. u. W. 44, 364](#) ff.: "about the age of the earth." [Geikie](#) on the "paleontological difficulties", which have not been solved so far and whose sure solving is not to be expected in the future, [L. u. W. 59, 71](#).

1439) Cf. Philippi, Glaubenslehre II, 225 f., citing [Baier-Walther II, 98](#).

1440) When [Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 427](#), says, "that a creation out of nothing is not directly taught in the canonical writings of the Bible, not even Hebr. 11:3 (and Rom. 4:17); there is only the address of an elevation out of nothingness into existence", then it is clear that the last sentence completely cancels the former. The elevation from nothingness into existence is precisely the creation out of nothing. Cf. on "nothingness" Twesten, *Vorlesungen über die Dogmatik der ev.-luth. K.* II, Abteil. 1, 75 f.; cf. [Baier-Walther II, 97 f.](#)

3. The Period of creation. [^](#)

The period of the creation covers six days, as Gen. 1:31 and 2:2 are expressly reported (Hexaemeron). This period is neither to be limited for pious reasons (to put God's omnipotence more into the light) to a moment (Athanasius, Augustinus, Hilarius) nor also to be extended for unpious reasons (to reconcile the scripture with allegedly "fixed results" of science) to six periods of indefinite duration (so almost all modern theologians). Against the reinterpretation of the days into creation periods decides the decomposition of the days into evening and morning, which forces to the assumption of a twenty-four-hour day.¹⁴⁴¹⁾

4. The order in the work of creation. [^](#)

From Gen. 1 it is clearly recognizable that the creation progresses from the simple to the higher organized or from the imperfect to the perfect. God created first heaven and earth in their basic components ("world material"; Luther: *moles coeli et terrae*). Then successively

1441) Luther, St. L. I, 6: "Hilarius and Augustine, as the two greatest lights of the church, are of this opinion, that the world was created suddenly and at once (*subito et simul*), not successively through six days. And Augustine plays strangely with the six days, from which he makes days of secret interpretation of the knowledge in the angels (*mysticos dies cognitionis in angelis*), and does not leave six natural days. ... Because Moses does not want to teach us about allegorical creatures or an allegorical world, but about essential creatures and a visible world, which can be seen, felt and grasped, he calls every thing by its name (*appellat, ut proverbio dicitur, scapham scapham*), day and evening, as we use, without all allegories." Vilmar also confesses, "In the application which is made of these six days as early as Gen. 2:2-3, and afterwards in the law, twenty-four hour days are, however, meant, and the wording (evening and morning, the first day, the second day, etc.) seems to speak for it." Vilmar, Dogmatik I, 247; citing Baier-Walther II, 79. Vilmar then freely adds, "On the other hand, the provision Ps. 90:4 and 2 Peter 3:8, according to which a thousand years find like one day and one day like a thousand years before God, is not unfavorable to the assumption of periods of creation." But it is quite impossible to parallel Ps. 90:4 and 2 Peter 3:8 with the creation account. In the passages mentioned, the address is that there is no time in God and before God. The creation report, however, announces itself immediately by the first word "In the beginning" as going into time, as a historical report. This is also urged by the dogmatists together with Luther. Quenstedt I, 613.

created: 1. light, vv. 3-5; 2. visible firmament, vv. 6-8 (רָקִיעַ [HEBREW]); 3. sea and dry land and the plant life on the dry land, vv. 9-13; 4. sun, moon, and stars in the firmament, vv. 14-19; 5. aquatic animals and birds, vv. 20-23 ; 6. land animals and finally man, vv. 24-28.

However, this order followed by God is not to be reinterpreted into a self-development (evolution), since in the reported stepwise order the divine sole effect clearly emerges; e.g. the earth does not bring forth grass and herbage and (v. 24) living animals by way of self-development, but by God's omnipotent word (v. 11). The theory of "two factors" is to be rejected as evolutionistic. Luthardt, to be sure, says:¹⁴⁴²⁾ "Scripture tells us that in the progress of formations two factors have worked together: the self-ascending activity of the forces of nature and the creative influence of God." But this is a mistake. According to Scripture, grass and animals are not formed half by God's action and half by the "self-ascending activity" of the earth, but entirely by God's action. The earth is rather, as the dogmatists correctly say, the *materia, ex qua* ["*materia, ex qua*"] God alone creates grass and animals. Luthardt proposes "boundary regulation" between the Bible and natural science. This is a good suggestion. But he himself errs in matters of boundary regulation when he says, for example,¹⁴⁴³⁾ "Religion tells us that God gives us our daily bread; natural science teaches us how grain grows in the field." The error is so gross that two pages later Luthardt corrects himself in the words, "Even now the origin of life is an impenetrable mystery to us. How something becomes, no man is able to say, nor will we ever find out." That is certainly true. The really scientific, that is, on experience and observation founded, nature research knows no origin of organic beings from inorganic ones (*generatio aequivoca*) and no origin of a higher kind from a lower one.¹⁴⁴⁴⁾ And to add this

1442) The [Apology I, 70](#).

1443) [op. cit. p. 53](#).

1444) Cf. on the *generatio aequivoca* the quotations in [Luthardt, Apol. I, 236 f.](#) [Charles Hodge](#), *Systematic Theol* 11, 6 ff. reports about attempts in England to make life out of dead matter (with negative results). Following Ex. 8:18, [Walther](#) used to say somewhat crudely from time to time: "The natural scientists may have lice, but they cannot make any." [Huxley](#) admits that "evolution" is the emergence of the living from the non-living.

straight away: As the creation of the creatures, so also their existence, their activity and their reproduction is based on the incessant divine effect alone, not on "self-ascending activity" of the creatures or on half or whole evolution. For Col. 1:17: "All things exist in him" (God), and Acts 17:28: In him we live, move and are.

5. The work of creation in detail. [^]

Day One: In relation to "In the Beginning," בְּרֵאשִׁית [HEBREW], it has already been pointed out that there has been a beginning since things apart from God began to be. With the being of things apart from God, time and space begin. "Heaven and earth" in Scripture denotes the totality of created things (the world, the universe)."¹⁴⁴⁵) But since it is evident from what follows that heaven and earth were further formed in the six-day work, we rightly understand v. 1 to mean "*radis moles coeli et terrae*" ["radius, the mass of heaven and earth"] (Luther¹⁴⁴⁶) or with more recent ones the "world stuff." The water was created with the earth, since it surrounded the earth according to v. 2 and v. 9. תְּהוֹמֹת [HEBREW] is Jer. 4:23 used of a desolate land, here (Gen. 1:2) of a state in which things still lie disordered one within another. That we find in the תְּהוֹמֹת וְהָאֵרֶץ [HEBREW] (Gen. 1:2) the remnants of a world that had perished by the fall of the angels, and thus in Gen. 1 to see only a restoration of an earlier creation (Kurtz, agreeing Delitzsch, Rudelbach, Guericke), is indicated by nothing in the text.¹⁴⁴⁷) With respect to "heaven" would be added: With Scholastics, Romans, Calvinists and

That there is no scientific proof for the origin of a higher species from a lower one and that in this respect the real natural science remains in accordance with the biblical creation report ("each according to its kind"), is often treated in our publications, e.g. [L. u. W. 44, 303; 46, 233; 54, 559; 59, 75](#) [[search "evolution" here:](#)]. Evolution, and what is connected with it, is treated and refuted in great detail in [L. u. W. 46, 8-239; 55, 289-550](#).

1445) Gen. 2:1; Is. 37:15; Jer. 32:17. — Acts 4:24; 14:15; Col. 1:16: Ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, τὰ ὁρατά καὶ τὰ ἀόρατα.

1446) Opp. ex. vri. I, 11; [St. L. I, 9](#).

1447) Cf. the longer quotation from Kurtz' "Bibel und Astronomie" 2, p. 94-96; in [Baier-Walther II, 83](#). Against the "restitution theory" also Zöckler, RE. ² XIII. 645 f.

Arminians think of the heaven mentioned in Genesis 1 as a heaven of fire (*coelum empyrium*) above the visible heaven, which is the dwelling place of the angels and the saved and of God Himself, but the text does not give any reason for this.¹⁴⁴⁸) The heaven of the angels and the saved is not a created space, but the state of the blessed foam of God, as is clear from Matt. 18:10. The angels are at the same time in heaven during their service on earth, because they always see God's face.¹⁴⁴⁹ The light that God created on the first day is the "elemental light" that only later (on the fourth day) was bound to luminous bodies. According to the clear testimony of the Scriptures, the light was present before the sun, moon and stars. We can have nothing against this as long as we believe an almighty God."¹⁴⁵⁰

Second day: the expanse or firmament (רָקִיעַ [HEBREW]) is not the layer of air between the earth and the clouds (according to Baier and others), but the visible vault of heaven (according to Luther and others); v. 8: "And God called the heavens"; v. 14: "the רָקִיעַ [HEBREW] of heaven." According to vv. 6-8, the רָקִיעַ [HEBREW] is the part (מִכְדָּלִיל [HEBREW]) between the upper and lower waters. So there is water even above the visible firmament. Isn't that dangerous? The water above the firmament is no more dangerous than the waters of the sea, which are also held in place by God's omnipotence alone.¹⁴⁵¹

1448) Quenstedt I, 623: *Dulce sine somno somnium et merum figmentum*. ["A sweet dream without sleep and a mere figment."]

1449) Cf. vol. III, note 1891.

1450) Question: Is the light a fine matter (emanation or emission theory) or wave motion of "the molecules of the ether" (undulation theory)? Still today both theories go side by side, as the proceedings about the X-rays showed. Baier means II, 84: *Intelligi videtur corpus quoddam lucidum dependenter a substantia coeli productum*. ["It seems to be understood that a certain luminous body was produced depending on the substance of heaven."] Chemnitz, Loci 1, 120: *Quia Paulus* 2 Cor. 4:6 inquit: *Deus iussit ex tenebris lucem splendescere, id est, cum essent tenebrae, Deo dicente vel iubente subito exstitit lux: ideo videtur lux quoque immediate ex nihilo creata esse*. ["Because Paul 2 Cor. 4, 6 says: God commanded light to shine out of darkness, that is, when there was darkness, light suddenly came into existence by God saying or commanding: therefore it seems that light was also created immediately from nothing."] *The Century Dictionary*, IV, 3445, sub "Light", does not indicate the state of the controversy exactly, when it says there that Newton's "emission theory" is spent today.

1451) Luther, St. L. I, 32: "But this is very strange that Moses makes three parts with clear words and puts the firmament in the middle of the waters. And I would like to have these thoughts and speculation of it, that the firmament would be the highest and supreme above all things, but the waters

Third day: God closes the water in special places, so that land and sea come into being, v. 9-10. The dry land then brings forth the plant world at God's word of command. The plants are earlier than the seed; for God creates ready plants that bear seed (מַרְיֵץ זָרַע [HEBREW]). This answers the question, which has become famous, whether the oak tree or the acorn is the *prius* ["first"].

Fourth day: God created sun, moon and stars. From what (*materia ex qua*) the stars were created is not stated, but for what purpose (*finis cuius*) and for whose benefit (*finis cui*) they exist. They are supposed to be light givers and time dividers for the earth, Gen. 1:14-18. The scripture does not teach a so-called astronomical "system", but the following facts: The earth is earlier than the sun, and light is also earlier than the sun. The earth was not created for the sun, but the sun for the earth. The sun, moon and stars depend on the existence of the earth for their existence and activity. When the end of the earth has come, because it has fulfilled its purpose of being the place of the proclamation of the gospel of the crucified Savior of sinners, then the sun, moon and stars disappear together with the whole present world. Matt. 24:14: "The gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world for a witness to all nations, and then the end will come." With the end of the earth has come the end of all things, of the universe, πάντων τὸ τέλος (1 Pet. 4:7). The sun, moon, and stars, whatever magnitude we men may ascribe to them in relation to the earth, have no independent history and no independent significance or accomplishment, but their history and their significance or accomplishment is dependent on the earth. These are certain, in the

which do not hang and hover above but below the sky, would be the clouds which we see; that therefore by the waters separated from the waters the clouds would be understood, which are separated from the waters of the earth. But Moses says in dry and clear words that the waters are above and below the firmament. Therefore I must take my thoughts captive here and accede to the word, whether or not I understand it." Jn. Meissner remarks, *Phil. sobria*, P. I, s. 3, qu. 3, p. 819: *Melior pars theologorum semper intellexit aquas proprie dictas, quas Deum singulari et mirabili ratione supra firmamentum vel coelum stellatum vere et realiter reposuisse defendunt.* [[Google](#)]

Holy Scriptures taught facts. Every Christian, and especially every Christian theologian, should keep the following in mind about all astronomical theories made by men:

a. Scripture never errs, even in physical matters. However, it is "not a textbook of the natural sciences". Its real purpose is rather to teach the way to heaven through faith in Christ.¹⁴⁵²⁾ But where it teaches, even if only incidentally, natural scientific things, it is also there unbreakable truth according to Jn. 10:35. b. There is in the Scriptures, however, an accommodation to human doctrines,¹⁴⁵³⁾ but not an accommodation to erroneous human doctrines. We are not allowed to limit the statements: "The scripture cannot be broken" (Jn. 10:35) and: "Your word is the truth" (Jn. 17:17) to the fact that they do not refer to historical, geographical, natural history etc. information is to be thought of. c. We should also remember and let others remind us of the fact that our human knowledge is naturally very limited with regard to the things that belong to the astronomical field, because we lack the overview, namely the point of view outside the earth. As the geographer [Daniel](#), who counts himself for his person to the "Copernicans", reminds:"^{1454a)} "All established world systems are not based on experience, which would require a standpoint outside the earth, but on conclusions and combination. Therefore, all of them are and remain hypotheses." d. It is unworthy of a Christian to reinterpret or allow oneself to reinterpret the Holy Scripture, which he has recognized as God's own word, according to human opinions (hypotheses), including the so-called Copernican world system.^{1454b)}

1452) 2 Tim. 3:15; Jn. 17:20; 20:31; Eph. 2:20-22.

1453) This has been stated at length and repeatedly in the doctrines of God, for example, when Scripture addresses a *praescientia Dei* ["*praescientia Dei*"] or a *descensus Dei* ["the descent of God"].

1454 a) Dr. H. A. Daniel, [Handbuch der Geographie 3, 1877, p. 9.](#)

1454 b) Especially those, who consider themselves "Copernican", have the bad habit to declare their "world view" as a "fixed result of science". This also appeared on the occasion of the matter of Lisco and Knak (1868). [Lehre und Wehre of the same year, p. 325, takes](#) note of the case, which at that time caused great excitement also in America, in such a way that it contrasts statements of [Twisten](#) and [Ströbel](#). [See [this blog series](#)]

Fifth day: God created aquatic animals and birds, vv. 20-22. Gerhard calls the fifth day of creation the "birthday" of the fish and the birds.¹⁴⁵⁵⁾ With respect to the *materia ex qua* of the birds, a difference is found among Lutheran theologians. They agree in the fact that with the so-called *creatio mediata*, that is, with the emergence of creatures from existing matter, every form of the self-activity of the matter (evolution) is to be rejected. The matter existing since the first day of creation can only be considered as matter from which (*materia ex qua*) the

The following had happened: The Berlin pastor Lisco had claimed in a "[church report](#)" for the Berlin district synod that the natural sciences had destroyed "the world view of the biblical writers" forever, and that even no "orthodox" of modern times would still believe with the Bible that the earth is fixed and the sun moves around the same. To this challenge, the Berlin pastor Knak had replied, "Yes, I believe that; I know of no other worldview than that of the Holy Scriptures." This statement of Knak's called out great wrath among all who considered themselves "scientifically" Copernican. "*L. u. W.*" reports a. a. O. [Ed.- *Lehre und Wehre* vol. 14 (1868), p. 325, under heading "[In Berlin has recently...](#)"; see [here](#) for Google Translation]: "The old Oberkonsistorialrat Twesten addressed the following words to his listeners in his college: 'Do not believe that you as theologians have the unfortunate privilege of having to be narrow-minded.'" On this clog Ströbel put the following wedge in the "[Publication for Lutheran Theology and Church](#)," 1868, p. 734: "As long as man keeps his head up, the dream specter of the earth's rotation will appear to him not as the result of science, but as a folly testifying to thoughtlessness or inability to think." Ströbel writes this in the advertisement of a writing of Pastor J. L. Füller, "[Das Alte Testament dem Zweifel und dem Anstoß gegenüber](#)". Ströbel praises this writing, but counts it among the "rust spots" that Füller claims: "We followers of the Copernican system know what Joshua and his army did not know." To this Ströbel remarks: "But the word (Jos. 10:13): 'The sun stood still' does not come from the son of Nun and the children of Israel, but from the Holy Spirit; should he perhaps also first go to school with Copernicus? Why did Pastor Füller not remain true to his principle also with regard to that astronomical system: 'No one will dispute who has not yet completely renounced his own thinking and testing and does not yet accept in blind faith all the unproven and unprovable premises and assertions as the results of science'? This is also what we meant when we said above, 'It is unworthy of a Christian to reinterpret or allow himself to reinterpret the Holy Scriptures, which after all he has recognized as God's own Word, according to human opinions (hypotheses; cf. Dr. Daniel).'" Luther is known to be opposed to all astronomical systems when they are held out for objective truth beyond experience. (*Opp. Ex.*, Erl. 1, 35 sqq. [St. L. I, 33](#) [Ed.- see paragr. # 67; *Am. Ed. 1*, p. 27]; [XI, 300 ff.](#) [*Am. Am. Ed. vol. 52*, p 164 ff]). By the way, about a year ago the newspaper writers threatened that Einstein's theory of relativity would take the life of Copernicanism.

1455) *Loci, L, De Creatione*, § 32.

infinite power of God brings forth the creatures, each according to its kind. Matter is *principium passivum, non concurrat* [as second factor] *cum Deo ad aliquod creandum*.¹⁴⁵⁶⁾ But as for the matter from which the birds are created, Luther and Calov say: *ex aqua* ["from water"], Baier and Hollaz: *ex terra* [from earth"]. Hollaz contradicts (op. cit.) the *ex aqua* rather vividly. He appeals to Gen. 2:19: "When God the Lord had made of the earth (אֶרֶץ הָאָדָמָה [HEBREW]) all kinds of beasts of the field and all kinds of birds under the sky, he brought them to man", and claims that here with the "of the earth" also the *materia ex qua* of the birds is explicitly stated. On the other hand, Gen. 1:20 is only for the fish the water as *materia ex qua* mentioned, and the words referring to the birds are to be translated: "and the birds fly on the earth", without explicit indication of the water as an element of origin also of the birds. We have to accept this. But Hollaz overlooks that ch. 2:19 the "from the earth" stands only with the creation of the animals and the relation to the birds is not necessary. Walther, quoting both sides, does not decide. We can leave the matter undecided. We admire God's work of creation in both the fish and the birds. Chemnitz directs our attention to this (*Loci* I, 122), although he assumes that *ex aqua*.

Sixth day: Creation of the land animals from the earth, Gen. 1:24; 2:19. It has been asked here whether the animals that now dwell in foul substances, furthermore the animals that now harm man, were already originally created by God. We should answer: that these animals a. were already present at creation, but b. had a different field of activity. Before the fall there was no *φθορά* ["wear and tear"] in nature and no revolt in the animal world against man yet. Of the poisonous plants it is to be said that they were not poisonous before the fall either according to their nature, or nevertheless, that what is poisonous for the man now, harmed him in his uncorrupted state nothing. Thus Luther and dogmatists.¹⁴⁵⁷⁾

1456) Hollaz, *Examen* I. s. 3, qu. 26. Quenstedt I, 607.

1457) Cf. the quotations in Baier-Walther II, 87 sq. Luther, St. L. I, 249 ff. Gerhard, *Loci*, L. De Creatione, § 33 -. *Si quaeratur de herbis venenatis, de bestiis noxiis etc., respondemus verbis Augustini de Gen. ad litteram* I. 3, c. 15: "Creatura animalia noxia nihil homini nocuissent, si non peccasset. Puniendorum namque vitiorum et terrenorum vel probandae vel perf-".

Finally, God created man on the sixth day. The glory of man above the other creatures is indicated in the following circumstances of creation: 1. the creation of man is preceded by a consultation of the triune God: "Let us make man!" Gen. 1:26. 2. God does something special in the creation of man, in that in the same He does not speak, as in the creation of the animals, "Let the earth bring forth," but forms the body of man from an earthen lump (אֶרֶץ [HEBREW]) and blows into it the breath of life by a special act. In the blowing in of the breath of life we find rightly implied that man has a rational and immortal soul distinct from the life principle of the animals;¹⁴⁵⁸⁾ but it is not thereby taught that the human soul is an outflow of the divine essence or a part of God (Pantheism). (4) Special reference should be made to the creation of man in God's image (צֶלְמֵנוּ [HEBREW] and כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ [HEBREW] Gen. 1:26), whereby man was created with knowledge of God and perfect righteousness and holiness. This is to be explained in more detail in the first part of the anthropology under the section "Man before the fall". The appointment of man as ruler over the earth and its inhabitants. Gen. 1:26-28.¹⁴⁵⁹⁾

ciendae virtutis causa nocere coeperunt; fuerunt ergo creata innoxia, sed propter peccatum facta sunt noxia." [[Google](#)] [Andrew White, The Warfare of Science, I, 30](#), attempts to mock here. He says: "Luther, who followed St. Augustine in so many other matters, declined to follow him fully in this [namely, that there were "superfluous" animals]. To him [Luther] a fly was not merely superfluous, it was noxious — sent by the devil to vex him when reading." For White, everything that Scripture teaches about creation, the Fall, and the consequences of the Fall is merely myth.

1458) [Lukas Osiander](#) in his Bible work to Gen. 2:7: *Factus est homo animal vivum, sed rationale, non brutum; non enim reliquis animalibus vitam inspirasse Deus dicitur sicut homini.* [[Google](#)]

1459) We only add some words of Luther to Gen. 2:7, *Opp. exeg. Erl. I, 104 sqq., St. L. I, 101 ff.*: *Hic redit Moses ad opus sexti diei et ostendit, unde cultor terrae venerit, nempe, quod Deus eum finxerit ex gleba, sicut figulus manu ex luto fingit ollam. Ideo supra non dixit, sicut de aliis creaturis: Producat terra hominem; sed: "Faciamus hominem", ut ostendat excellentiam generis humani et revelet Dei consilium singulare, quo usus est in condendo homine, etsi posthac homo crescit et multiplicatur eodem modo quo reliquae bestiae. ... Sed in prima conditione ostendit Moses, maximam esse dissimilitudinem, siquidem singulari tum consilio, tum sapientia, humana natura condita et digito Dei formata est. Haec dissimilitudo, quae inter originem hominis et pecudum est, etiam ostendit immorta-*

Dichotomy and Trichotomy. [^]

The assumption that man consists of three essentially different parts, of the σῶμα, as the material part, of the ψυχή, as the lower or animal principle of life, which man has in common with the animals, and of the πνεῦμα, as the higher or spiritual principle of life, by which man differs from the animals, is not sufficiently supported by scriptural passages such as Luke 1:46-47 and 1 Thess. 5:23. In the first place ("My soul, ψυχή, exalts the Lord, and my spirit, πνεῦμα, rejoices in God my Savior") soul and spirit obviously stand in factual parallelism. The thought: "my lower life principle" exalts the Lord, and "my higher life principle" rejoices God, my Savior, is far from the context. In the words 1 Thess. 6:23: τό ὁλόκληρον υμῶν τό πνεῦμα καί ἡ ψυχή καί τό σῶμα is the address of the continued sanctification of Christians in view of the Last Day, and there it is advisable not to take πνεῦμα at all as a natural part of

litatem. Etsi enim omnia reliqua opera Dei plena admirationis et valde magnifica sunt, tamen hominem hoc arguit esse praestantissimam creaturam, siquidem Deus in eo condendo consilium adhibet et novo modo utitur. Non relinquit eum fingendum terrae, sicut bestiae et arbores. Sed ipse eum format ad imaginem sui, tamquam participem Dei et qui fruiturus sit requie Dei. Itaque Adam, antequam a Domino formatur, est mortua et iacens gleba; eam apprehendit Deus et format inde pulcherrimam creaturam, participem immortalitatis. [Google] Haec si Aristoteles audiret, solveretur in cachinnum et iudicaret, esse, etsi non insuavem, tamen absurdissimam fabulam, quod homo quoad originem suam primam fuisset gleba, formatus autem sit divina sapientia et sic conditus, ut esset capax immortalitatis. Nam etiamsi qui ex philosophis, ut Socrates et alii, asseruerunt immortalitatem animorum, tamen a reliquis philosophis irrisi et tantum non explosi sunt. Sed annon magna est fatuitas, sic offendi rationem, cum videat adhuc hodie plenam admirationis esse hominis generationem? An enim non absurdum iudi-cabis, hominem, qui in aeternum victurus est, nasci quasi ex ima guttula seminis in lumbis patris? Maior in hoc fere absurditas est, quam quod Moses dicit, de gleba digitis Dei formata. Sed ratio hoc modo ostendit, se plane nihil scire de Deo, qui sola cogitatione ex gleba facit non semen hominis, sed ipsum hominem, et, quod postea Moses dicit, ex costa viri facit feminam. Haec prima hominis origo est. Creato autem sic masculo et femina postea ex eorum sanguine divina benedictione generatur homo. [Google] Quamquam autem haec cum brutis communis generatio est, non tollit tamen illam gloriam originis nostrae primae, quod sumus vascula Dei ab ipso Deo ficta, quod ipse est figulus noster, nos autem lutum eius, sicut Iesaias sexagesimo quarto loquitur. [Google]

man, but as a designation of the whole spiritual essence of the born-again man, in which case καὶ ἡ ψυχή καὶ τὸ σῶμα is a post-determined approximation to ὁλόκληρον ὑμῶν τὸ πνεῦμα and subordinate to it. The dichotomy is decisively supported by passages like Matt. 10:28: "Do not fear those who kill the body and may not kill the soul; but rather fear him who may destroy both body and soul into hell." Here man is described according to his whole being (according to his "totality"), and yet only "body" and "soul" are mentioned next to each other. Here also belongs Matt. 6:25. That soul and spirit are the same or alternate concepts according to their essence, is also evident from the fact that those who have departed from this life after laying aside the body are called spirits (πνεύματα) as well as souls (ψυχαί).¹⁴⁶⁰ Recent theologians are divided,¹⁴⁶¹ Lutheran dogmatists are almost unanimous dichotomists.)¹⁴⁶²

The unity of the human race. ^

There are neither men before Adam (preadamites)¹⁴⁶³ nor men beside Adam (coadamites),¹⁴⁶⁴ but all men are Adamites, that is, Adam is the first man and the only progenitor of the whole human race. This is not a theological problem, but a doctrine clearly revealed in Scripture. Gen. 1:26-28: one pair of parents; Acts 17:26: ἐξ ἐνὸς αἵματος; Rom. 5:12: "Through one man sin entered the world." With this recent naturalists agree.¹⁴⁶⁵ The woman God did not create independently from a lump of earth and by blowing in the breath of life, but formed from a constituent part of the man (rib) (XXX [HEBREW]). The woman (הֵמָּלָא [HEBREW]) comes from the man (XXX [HEBREW]), and that according to body and soul.¹⁴⁶⁶

1460) 1 Petr. 3:19. — Rev. 6:9. 1461) [Luthardt, Comp. 11, p. 166 f.](#)

1462) Cf. the antithesis in Quenstedt, I, 738 sq., and the quotations in [Baier-Walther, II, 91 sq.](#)

1463) So Isaac la Peyrere († 1676) et al: Adam is only the progenitor of the Jews. [Baier-Walther II, 93](#), Antithesis. Recently Schelling, E. v. Bunsen, M'Causland, Zöckler, RE. ² IX, 583.

1464) Polygenism or autochthonism. The Hellenes did not want to descend from the "barbarians". Zöckler, op. cit.

1465) [Luthardt, Apologie 1, 76](#). Zöckler, op. cit. p. 583 ff.

1466) Thus, Luther, Quenstedt, etc. [Luther, Opp. ex. Eri. I, 162](#): Sic accipio, quod non nudam costam, sed vestitam carne acceperit Dominus, sicut

Details on the biblical account of creation. [^]

1. Whether Moses received the account of creation by direct divine revelation or had it from the tradition of the first created, who in their turn were instructed by God, need not be made the decisive point of controversy.¹⁴⁶⁷⁾ In any case, the biblical account of creation is God's own account because all Scripture is inspired by God. The biblical account of creation bears the divine stamp recognizable even to human reason, especially also when we compare it with the creation narratives of other peoples.¹⁴⁶⁸⁾ — Because modern theologians cannot recognize Scripture as God's Word, and therefore cannot recognize the biblical account of creation as God's account, the compliments they pay to the biblical account naturally end with a criticism that springs from the impious ego of the theologizing individual."¹⁴⁶⁹⁾

Adam infra dicit: "Hoc est ex ossibus meis et caro de carne mea." Porro hoc quoque fecit Dominus per verbum, suum, ne putemus, eum chirurgi more sectione aliqua usum esse. [Google] Quenstedt 1, 731: Costa, ex qua mulier formata est, non mortua fuit aut inanimis, sed animata, utpote de vivo corpore-divina manu sumpta. Atque ita Eva secundum animam et corpus eas ea producta est, non vero anima Evae a Deo immediate creata est ex nihilo ipsique divinitus indita, sed costa Adami fuit animae humanae ad Evam tradox, hoc est, extitit ea non immediata creatione, sed propagatione et traductione.... Ex costa animata animata formata est mulier, Gen. 2:22. [Google]*

1467) Cf. Luther on Gen. 25:5-6. [St. L. 1, 1758](#).

1468) Zöckler, RE. ² XIII, 631 ff.

1469) This is also true with respect to Zöckler, if we compare RE. ² XIII, sub-"Creation", p. 629 ff., with p. 644 ff. Zöckler first says: "If there is only one living personal God, nothing in the world can have taken its origin otherwise than through the absolute will of power and love of this one God; his creative activity must be the cause of the existence of the epitome of all beings which are not themselves God find. This only true concept of creation is nowhere more purely conceived and carried out than in the two documents of biblical monotheism, the Old and the New Testament"; p. 644 ff. but Zöckler calls e.g. "the rigidly literal version of the work of six days as a period of exactly 6x24 hours, as it became common in orthodox dogmatics since Luther", "the after-effects of the abstract monotheistic concept of creation of older Judaism". Very seriously Zöckler also demands a balance "with the incontrovertibly established facts of geological and astronomical science". He wants, "indeterminably long periods of a prehuman history of development of our globe". That the light before the sun and the sun only after the earth,

2. In Gen. 1 and 2 we do not have two different creation reports, but Gen. 2 clearly reveals itself as a more elaborated report about the creation and the first dwelling place of man. That ch. 2 calls God יהוה אֱלֹהִים [HEBREW], while

 Zöckler eliminates "by assuming that the account in Gen. 1:14-19 is an optical or merely phenomenological one". In order to harmonize the Mosaic creation account with "the results of scientific research", Godet, who does not belong to the liberal wing of the newer theologians, resorts to the vision theory and creates a "painting" of the Hexaemeron, which is not only remotely reminiscent of a novel. He writes in his *Bibelstudien (Erster Teil, zum A. T., Hannover 1875, pp. 101 ff.)*: "We sit with the Man of God on the mountain. Darkness reigns all around us. Around us and in us that silence prevails which precedes divine revelations. The prophetic sense, which everyone possesses by nature, awakens in us, and just as St. John saw in his vision from the rocky island of Patmos the last times of the world and, as it were, their flowing out into eternity, so we see the beginning of the universe, see, as it were, the stream of time bursting forth from the springs of eternity. In this solemn darkness a dull sound strikes our ear as of a sea moved by a mighty wind, whose surface rises and falls in mighty waves and whose waves crash and break against each other. The sound comes from the ocean in which our whole earth is still wrapped as in a shroud. The moving wind is the breath of the Spirit of God that broods over this egg full of mysteries, so that from it a world full of wonders, a humanity, a Christ may come forth. We feel it: this darkness is not that of the night of the grave, but that of the fruit-bearing night, which is the cradle of all life. And in this darkness, which lasts only a moment, find countless centuries crowded together, all the times that have passed since the creation of matter until the formation of the solid crust of the earth and until the condensation of the waters on its surface. Suddenly a voice breaks the silence of this long night: Immediately an elucidation illuminates the scene, and on all sides of the horizon shimmering sheaves are sprouting. It is a crown of light, like the one that now and then lights up the inhabitants of the far north during their month-long nights. In this light, through the dense mists that cover the earth, we perceive the shoreless expanse of water all around us. From time to time, hot vapors emanating from the volcano in the earth's interior stir the waves and raise a bottom to their surface, which, however, soon sinks again. The rays of light gradually lose their luster, pale more and more, and finally go out again completely. We hear only the roar of the great waters that flow around us. Darkness surrounds us. In this one day, however, we have seen the representation of thousands of days that shone above our earth before a human eye was there to observe them. Again the voice resounds: 'Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it be a separation between the lower and the upper waters!' Again it becomes day" etc.

Ch. 1 אֱלֹהִים [HEBREW] serves to designate God, has factual reason, since ch. 2 describes God's doings in relation to man in particular, and thus in ch. 2 we have the beginning of the history of man."¹⁴⁷⁰⁾

3. The dispute about the best world. That the world, as God created it, is good, we know from Genesis 1:31: "God looked at all that He had made, and behold, it was very good" (וַיַּב ְרָאָה [HEBREW]). Whether this world is the best in the sense that God could not have made a better world is a useless question, since God's will is the standard of all things, including goodness and beauty. The goodness of the creatures consists in the fact that they are in such a way, as God wanted to have them. Axiom: *Causam exemplarem (pattern) creationis ideae divinae rerum creandarum constituunt*. ["They constitute the pattern of the creative idea of the divine creation of things."] ¹⁴⁷¹⁾

The final purpose of the world. ^

About the final purpose of the world, the Scriptures teach that God created everything for His own sake (Prov. 16:4: "The Lord makes everything for His own sake") or for His glory (Ps. 104: praise of God from the realm of nature). Therefore, not only men (Ps. 104:1 ff.), but also all creatures without reason are called upon to praise God (Ps. 148). As attributes of God that are especially prominent in the work of creation, Scripture names God's omnipotence (Ps. 115:3: "Our God is in heaven; he can create whatever he wills"), God's wisdom (Ps. 104:24 and Ps.. 136:5: בְּחָכְמָה [HEBREW] and בְּתַבְינָה [HEBREW]) and God's goodness (Ps. 136 with the recurring phrase: "for his goodness endures forever"). The address that it is an idea unworthy of God, namely expresses selfishness on the part of God, if he created everything for his own sake and for his praise, is a. unscientific, because it measures the majestic God according to the measure of man, b. atheistic, because it ascribes to the creatures an independent existence next to God.

1470) See [Fürbringer, Einleitg. in d. A. T., St. L. 1913, the whole section "Der Pentateuch", p. 16 ff.](#) Furthermore, [L. u. W. 25, 321 ff.](#) Jean Astruc, a French physician († 1766), "the father of the source hypothesis." His book appeared in Brussels in 1753 under the title *Conjectures sur les memoires originaux dont il paroît que Mose s'est servi pour composer le livre de la Genese*.

1471) [Baier-Walther II, 96.](#)

Concluding remarks. [^](#)

That the creation as an *opus Dei ad extra* is a work of the triune God, was already explained in detail with the doctrine of God. To address three creators or a "distribution" of the work of creation among the three persons is contrary to Scripture and annoying. As the divine *essence, una numero essentia*, which exists only once, comes to each person wholly and undivided, so also all *opera ad extra*, including the creation of the world, come to each person wholly and undivided. They are *eaedem numero actiones* ["the same number of actions"].¹⁴⁷²⁾ But even Philippi slipped the phrase: "We see here [in creation] the efficacy distributed to all three [persons] quite equally."¹⁴⁷³⁾ Lutheran theologians firmly reject all thoughts of a "creation society" (*causae sociae creationis*).¹⁴⁷⁴⁾ How

1472) See the sections "The Camps Against the Deniers of the One God" and "Objections to Homousia or the Unity of God," pp. 461-474.

1473) Glaubenslehre 3 II, 126. That Philippi cannot call upon the so-called *particulae diacriticae* *εκ, διά, εν* for his way of speaking has already been shown above, p. 471 f.. Likewise, Luther, referring to the diacritical particles, says of John 1:3, [St. L. XII, 157 f.](#): "Now the Scripture retains the way that it speaks that the world was created through Christ and from the Father and in the Holy Spirit, which all has its cause, although not sufficiently explicable nor expressible. However, to indicate a little, it needs to speak in this way, so that it is indicated how not the Father from the Son, but the Son from the Father has the divine essence and the Father is the first, original person in the Godhead. Therefore it does not say that Christ made the world through the Father, but the Father through him, that the Father remains the first person and from him, but through the Son, all things come. In such a way also John speaks, ch. 1, 3: 'All things were made through Him', and Col. 1:16: 'All things consist through Him and in Him', and Rom. 11:36: 'All things are of Him, through Him and in Him.'" We summarized this p. 471 thus, "As there is an order, but not a subordination, in the three persons (*ordo in modo subsistendi*), so there is an order in the efficacy of the persons (*ordo in modo operandi*)," without subordination.

1474) [Baier-Walther II, 95](#): *Unam, inquam, causam [efficientem creationis], non tres causas socias* ["I say, one cause [of efficient creation], and not three causes. For the creative power of the three persons is unique."]. *Potentia enim creandi trium personarum unica est*. Quenstedt treats the question whether the three persons of the Godhead *causae sociae creationis dicendae sint* in great detail in a special *quaestio*, *Systema* I, 602 sqq, and answers the question negatively by referring to the *una numero essentia divina* and the *eaedem numero actiones divinae ad extra*.

decidedly Luther refuses to speak of three creators, we already saw above (p. 511).

Creation is a free, not a necessary act of God, Ps. 115:3: בְּלֹא אֱשֶׁרָה הָפֵקַן צִשְׁיָה [HEBREW]. The assumption that the creation of the world was a necessary act consequently includes pantheism in itself and cancels the concept of God. As with the redemption through the incarnation of the Son of God,¹⁴⁷⁵⁾ so with the creation of the world God is to be held as *causa libera*.¹⁴⁷⁶⁾

Divine Providence or the Preservation and Government of the World. ^

(*De providentia Dei.*)

1. The concept of divine providence. ^

As God created the world, so he sustains it. Col. 1:16-17: ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τα πάντα ... και τα πάντα ἰν αὐτῷ συνέστηκεν. This fact, according to common usage, we call divine providence, *providentia Dei*. We understand, then, by divine providentiality, the actual preservation and government of the universe and of all individual creatures by God's omnipresence and omnipotent operation. Synonymous with *providentia* have been used the Greek expressions πρόνοια and διοίκσις. The creation and preservation of the world stand closely bound together, Col. 1:16-17. God did not withdraw from the world in whole or in half or in the least after the creation of the world, but remains present to the world in the greatest and the smallest and

1475) Vol. II, p. 5, and note 13.

1476) Quenstedt I, 693: *Neque causa creationis προηγούμενη ulla fuit praeter solius Dei non ex necessitate naturae, sed ex libertate voluntatis se communicantis beneplacitum.* [[Google](#)] [Baier II, 96](#): *Vid. Ps. 136:5 sqq, ubi memoratis operibus creationis semper additur formula: "Quoniam in saeculum benignitas eius"* [[Google](#)] (יְהוָה [HEBREW]). Correctly also Kirn, *Grundriß der Evangelical Dogmatik 3, p. 59*: "According to the biblical view, the world did not come into being by necessary emanation from God, nor by the evolution of an eternal world substance from itself, but was called into existence by God's free creative will."

maintains it by his divine power and effect. Through this alone, the world has its existence. If God were to withdraw from the world, the world would disappear without a trace. If God were to withdraw from a part of the world, that part of the world would cease to exist. This is clearly stated by the words *τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ ἀννέατηκεν* ["everything in a man's life"]. The concept of the preservation of the world in the face of error probably no one has described more clearly on the basis of Scripture than Luther. One, in order to take the now existing world wholly or partly out of God's hand and to hand it over to the "laws of nature," has appealed to Gen. 2:2, where it is said that God rested on the seventh day from all his works which he had made. In contrast, Luther says of this passage:¹⁴⁷⁷⁾ "The Sabbath or the rest on the Sabbath means that God rested in such a way that He did not create another heaven or another earth (*aliud coelum et aliam terram*), and does not mean that God ceased to maintain and govern the heaven and earth that He had created. For in what way and by what means God created the heavens and the earth, Moses clearly taught in the previous chapter, namely that God created everything by the Word of God, as he then said: "The sea is filled with fish, the earth produces leaves and grass and animals," etc. Such words still remain today and are powerful; therefore we see that the multiplication goes on and on, without end. And even if the world should stand for innumerable years, the power of these words would not perish, but would be an eternal increase, from the power and might of this word or, that I call it so, of this first foundation. Therefore, the question is easily resolved: 'God rested from his works', that is, he was content (*contentus fuit*) with the heavens and the earth, which he had created at that time by the Word, did not create a new heaven or a new earth or new stars and new trees, and yet God always works, because he has not left the creature, which he once created, but governs and sustains it by the power of his Word. So now he has rested from creation and not from preservation and government." Luther therefore also says precisely:¹⁴⁷⁸⁾ "We Christians know that with God creating and preserving is one thing" (*idem est creare et conservare*). If we have reservations about the proposition that divine providence

1477) [St. L. I, 91 f.](#)

1478) [St. L. I, 1539.](#)

can also be described as continued creation (*creatio continuata*), this strongly indicates that we harbor inadequate conceptions of both creation and the maintenance of the world. Perhaps the thought has forced itself with us that the world is at least partly in the hands of the "laws of nature" or the *causae secundae*. More about this later.

The fact of divine providence can and should already be recognized from the realm of nature (Acts 14:17: "God has not left Himself unwitnessed" etc.) as well as from history (Acts 17:26-28: "God has made generations of one blood of all men to dwell on the face of the whole earth" etc.), thus by means of reason. But because of the blindness and perverseness of the human heart, the divine providence is also taught in many places of the Holy Scriptures. Thus by Christ Himself in detailed exposition Matt. 6:26-32: "Do not worry about your life, what you will eat and what you will drink. ... Look at the birds of the air: they do not sow, they do not reap, they do not gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. ... Look at the lilies of the field, how they grow. ... So God clothes the grass of the field" etc. Matt. 5:45: God τὸν ἥλιον αὐτὸν ἀνατέλλει. Thus Paul and Barnabas testify to the heathen at Lystra Acts 14:17: "God has not left Himself unwitnessed, has done us much good, and has given rain from heaven and fruitful seasons." And Paul to Athens, Acts 17:28: "In him we live, move, and have our being." Scripture also teaches that the preservation and government of the world as an *opus ad extra* is a work of the Triune God. John 5:17-19 says the Son of God precisely in reference to the preservation of the world: "Ὁ πατήρ μου εὖς ἄρτι ἐργάζεται, κἀγὼ ἐργάζομαι. But especially does the Scripture emphasize for the comfort of Christians that the Son of God, who became man, therefore also according to human nature, according to which He is our brethren, governs all things and sustains them in existence. Eph. 1:20-23: Ὁ ἀναβάς ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν, ἵνα πληρώσῃ] τὰ πάντα.¹⁴⁷⁹⁾

The object of divine providence. Scripture names as the object of divine providence both τὰ πάντα, Col. 1:17,

1479 The detailed exposition [vol. II, 183 ff.](#)

and the individual things that make up the universe: the plants, Matt. 6:28-30; the animals, Matt. 6:26; man, Acts 17:25-28. At the center of divine providence stands the Church. Scripture explicitly teaches that all things and all processes in heaven and on earth must serve the church. Rom. 8:28: τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν τον θεόν all things must serve for the best. Matt. 24:14: The world stands only for the sake of the church. Hebr. 1:14: The angelic world is placed in the service of the church.

Objections to divine providence. [^]

Against a divine providence, which includes all things, the objection has been raised that God is thereby weighted down and the small is considered too strongly in comparison with the great. It is obvious that by this argument the concept of God is annulled. The omnipotent and omniscient God is measured by human standards. The glory (δόξα) of the imperishable God is transformed into an image equal to the perishable man, Rom. 1:23. That atheistic heathens like Democritus, Epicurus *et al.* mocked the divine providentiality and called it an old wives' tale,¹⁴⁸⁰⁾ does not surprise us. But it is strange that even within the Christian Church a man like Jerome could write words like these:¹⁴⁸¹⁾ *Caeterum absurdum est, ad hoc deducere Dei maiestatem, ut sciat per momenta singula, quot nascentur culices quotque moriantur; quae cimicum, pulicum et muscarum sit in terra multitudo, quanti pisces in aqua natent. ... Non sumus tam fatui adulatorum [!] Dei, ut, dum potentiam eius etiam ad ima trahimus, in nosmet ipsos iniurii simus, eandem rationabilium et irrationabilium providentiam.* [[Google](#)] Gerhard tries in vain to put a good sense under Jerome's words.¹⁴⁸²⁾ Jerome was asleep here, as he often was.

1480) Quoted in Quenstedt I, 768 sqq.

1481) *Com. in Habac.* 1; in Quenstedt I, 769.

1482) Gerhard says *Loci, L. De Provid.*, § 58: *Nisi hoc dictum ita accipias, quod Deus quidem singula exacte cognoscat, non tamen modo cognoscendi, qui fit per momenta et intervalla successive, sed notitia intuitiva, qua omnia ὁρῶς, simul, aspicit, detrahet laudi divinae providentiae.* [[Google](#)] Gerhard therefore thinks that Jerome perhaps only wanted to say that God knows all things not successively, but at the same time. But those words cannot be understood that way. Jerome is concerned that men want to come too short,

But we do not need to judge him too harshly, if we consider that he only says what we all think too often. According to our natural alienated sense of God, we even forget that God cares for us, His children. Hence the admonitions of our Savior Matt. 6:25-32: "Do not be anxious for your lives," etc. "O ye of little faith!" Matt. 10:30: "But now also the very hairs of your head are all numbered." The whole question, whether the divine providence extends also to the least animals, is settled by church fathers and old theologians by the scriptural axiom: *Si non est iniuria et probrum Dei, minutissimas quasque res fecisse, multo minus probrum illius factas regere*. [[Google](#)]¹⁴⁸³⁾

if God would also take care of the small irrational animals in detail. Gerhard points out l. c. that the Scriptures expressly teach what Jerome's words seem to reject.

1483) Quotations from the Church Fathers in Quenstedt, l. c., § 59. Walther quotes in [Comp. Baier-Walther](#) [Ed. — 2, 164-165; [HathiTrust](#)] the following words from Rambach's "Schriftmäßige Erläuterung der Grundlegung der Th.", 1738, p. 157 f.: "The object of divine providence is all created things, none excepted, visible and invisible, living and lifeless, heaven, earth and sea, and all that is therein. As he created all things, so his providence extends to all things. He sustains 1. the invisible creatures, the angels; for the good ones cannot govern themselves without his wisdom and cannot sustain themselves without his power, the evil ones cannot harm themselves without his permission, and he sets purpose and limits to their wickedness; 2. the visible creatures, and among them man not only, as the noblest creature, but also all unreasonable animals. In Egypt, frogs and lice must do his bidding. But such provision extends over all genera, over all species, yes, over all individuals of each species; e.g. God provides not only for the genus of creatures called birds, but for each species, storks, swallows, sparrows, yes, for each individual specimen (matters) of the same, for each stork, swallow and sparrow. He cares not only for the trees to remain, to grow up and to be preserved, but also for each tree, branch and its leaf. Each of them is under his government, as Christ teaches Matt. 10:29. A sparrow is one of the most despised and (seemingly) useless birds; yet Christ says that none of them will perish, be shot or injured without the Father's will. Luke 12:6: "Not one of them is forgotten in the sight of God. Even the smallest, most despised and useless things are subject to divine government and providence. Christ assures us of this Matt. 10:30: "Now find the very hairs of your head numbered," that none of them can come out other than according to the Father's will. What we consider valuable, we count. So it means to maintain an exact science and diligence. As the sunlight does not spurn the least worm, so does not the providence of God.

2. The Relationship of divine providence to the *causae secundae*.

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By *causae secundae* we understand the means by which divine providence operates. God works, and the means work. Ps. 127:1: The Lord builds the house, and the workers build the house. But the relationship between the effect of the means and the effect of God is this: the effects are not coordinated, but subordinated, and subordinated to the extent that the means work only that, and work only as much and as long as God works through them. For, "Where the Lord buildeth not the house, they labor in vain that build it." We can, of course, speak of a natural nature, movement, power, and effect of creatures. But what is natural to creatures, e.g., that the worm creeps, the man walks, the sun shines, the tree grows and bears fruit after its kind, the medicine heals, the bread nourishes, the watchman protects, etc., this is God's action on creatures (*Dei in*

So we must therefore realize that this also extends to the smallest things. It is not the case, therefore, that an earthly king takes care of all and every one of his subjects by a general decree, although there are many thousands of things that the king does not know. God knows the smallest things and takes care of them, as Christ, the mouth of truth, assures. It is true that reason thinks that it is indecent to the majesty of God that he should lower himself even to the least of his creatures. The heathen Pliny thinks that the divine majesty is defiled when it cares for despised things. But these are foolish thoughts, as they are also cherished by the great church teacher Jerome. 1. The glory of his infinite goodness, when he embraces with the arms of his providence both the lowest worm and the highest angel. If it is not indecent for God to create them, why should it be indecent for him to preserve them? 2. The glory of his power and wisdom. The power of God is no less visible in the creation of the gnat than of an elephant; so also in its preservation. Wisdom shows its excellence in directing and guiding creatures, which themselves do not know the purpose of their being, to such. There is also no difference among the creatures in itself, but it arises only from the relation to us; e.g. one believes that a worm is more contemptible than a lion. This, of course, as we regard it, is better than a worm; but, if we disregard the relation, the least worm has as much excellence in its kind as a lion. For this consists only in a certain nature of the parts of which the body is composed. God also makes no burden, as one would like mine. His infinite mind cannot be overloaded nor weighed down."

creaturas influxus). Gerhard says in regard to this point: 1⁴⁸⁴) "What is more natural to man than that he moves? And yet we move in God, Acts 17:28. What is more natural to the sun than that it should rise day by day? And yet God Ανατέλλει τον ήλιον, Matt. 5:45. Therefore, although to individual things their attribute is naturally given (*indita*), yet they actuate the same and can actuate the same only in such a way that they receive their essence and life (*essentientur et vegetentur*) through the divine power that I speak thus. Ps. 104:29-30: "You hide your face, and they are terrified; you take away their breath, and they perish and return to dust. Thou sendest forth thy breath, and they are created; and thou renewest the form of the earth. Deut. 8:3 and Matt. 4:4 say that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. This not only teaches us that God can nourish and sustain man without natural means, but also reminds us that the power of nourishment is not so inherent in bread that it can nourish man even after the withdrawal of the Word of God, by which bread was first created and received its power of nourishment. The uninterrupted action of the word, which as it were creates and sustains, is necessary for the bread to exercise (*exserat*) the nutritive power given to it. The same can and must be said in the field of medicine. Man does not become healthy through the herbs, but through the Word of God, which originally gave the herbs that power and still today "instills" (*instillat*) it, as it were. This is also the meaning of our table prayers ("Say the blessing on the gifts" etc.) and the prayer we say in sickness before taking a medicine. This is also what that doctor wanted to express when he said in regard to a patient he had treated: "I have bound him, God has healed him."

To hold this truth, the Lutheran doctrines say that the action of God and the action of the means are not duae actioness, but una numero actio. The action of God and the action of the means are neither to be divided according to the extent, as if it were half to God and half to the means, nor to be separated according to the time, as if God first worked and then

1484) *Loci, L. De Provid.*, § 62, 63.

afterwards and later the means or the creatures worked according to a power put into them before.¹⁴⁸⁵⁾ In order to reject the temporally separated effect, the dogmatists still expressly say that the effect of the *causae secundae* is not the consequence of an *actio Dei praevia* (a preceding effect of God), but the result of a *continuus Dei in creaturas influxus* (an uninterrupted effect in the creatures and through the creatures)¹⁴⁸⁶⁾ To hold this is of great importance for Christian faith and Christian life. If we hold that the effect of God and the effect of the *causae secundae* are not to be separated, but coincide in extent and time, then, looking at ourselves, we speak with Job 10:8, "Thy hands have wrought and made me," and confess with Luther in the Small Catechism, "I believe that God created me [not merely Adam] together with all creatures, gave me body and soul, eyes, ears and all members, reason and all senses, and still sustains me." Although we have from our parents as *causae secundae* the soul and also the body according to all its parts, yet at the same time we know that God is our Creator and Father. With respect to all those born of parents, what Luther says applies:¹⁴⁸⁷⁾ "It is God who makes the skin; it is he who also makes the bones; it is he who makes the hair on the skin; it is he who also makes the marrow in the bones; it is he who makes every bit of the hair; it is he who makes every bit of the marrow; indeed, he must make everything, both bit and whole." Further:¹⁴⁸⁸⁾ "He that made man of the earth, he maketh man of the seed of parents every day." In order to reject the idea that God, if he works through means, is separated from the world through these means, Luther says:¹⁴⁸⁹⁾ "God does not send out officials or angels when he creates or sustains something, but all such things are the work of his divine power itself. But if he is to create and maintain it, he must be there and make and maintain his creature both in the most intimate and in the most extraneous." Quenstedt wants to express the same when he says to deism, which inserts the "laws of nature" between God and the world, separating them:¹⁴⁹⁰⁾ *Falsum*

 1485) So Durandus († 1334), Taurellus († 1606), also Arminian. In Quenstedt I, 782.

1486) Quenstedt I, 780. 1487) [St. L. XX, 804](#).

1488) [I, 155](#).

1489) [XX, 804](#).

1490) *Systema* I, 781.

est secundam causam [the means by which God acts] mediare inter primam causam [God] *et effectum, cum aequae immediate effectus dependeat a causa prima sicut a secunda.* As for the "laws of nature," they are not something distinct from the will and action of God, but God's will and effect itself in its relation to existence and the action of creatures.¹⁴⁹¹⁾ This has already been pointed out in the doctrines of God and especially in the description of miracles.

3. Divine Providence and sin. ^

If we ask about the effect of God in the actions of moral beings (men and angels), we must distinguish between evil and good actions. With regard to evil actions, according to Holy Scriptures, three things stand first: 1. that God does not will them according to his holy will: "Thou shalt not have other gods beside me"; "Thou shalt not kill," etc.; 2. that God often prevents their happening, as with Abimelech of Gerar, Gen. 20:1 ff. 3. that God turns the sins that actually occur from their evil purpose to His good purpose, as in the case of Joseph's sale to Egypt, Gen. 60:20. But a much discussed question is how God's involvement in the sinful acts during their occurrence is to be understood. What the doctrines of Scripture teach on this matter can be summarized thus: God cooperates in evil actions insofar as they are actions (*quoad materiale*), because Scripture says of men that they have life, movement and existence in God, Acts 17:28. God does not cooperate with evil actions insofar as they are evil (*quoad formale*), because Scripture says of God: "Thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak lies;

 1491) [Baier II, 169](#): *Deus manifestum facit, se non esse alligatum ad causas physicas et ordinem libere a se institutum* . Baier points out the following examples: *Causae secundae, in actu per naturam nondum constitutae, ad agendum divinitus applicantur*-, vid. 1 Reg. 18, 44 *de accelerata pluvia. Aliquando Deus causis secundis virtutem agendi vel plane supernaturalem confert, vel naturalem amissam aut debilitatam restituit et confirmat aut augeat*; vid. Iud. 16:28. 29 *de robore Simsonis restaurato auctoque*, Gen. 17:16. 17. 19 *de potentia generandi Abrahamo centenario et Sarae nonagenariae atque alias sterili collata. Denique nonnunquam causas secundas per naturam in actu constituendas impedit Deus, quominus effectus sequatur, prout Deut. 28:23 minatur, se pluviam subtracturum populo inobedienti.* [[Google](#)]


the Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and the false," Ps. 5:5-7. We know very well that this distinction between *material* and *formal peccati* does not declare anything for our human understanding. But we also know that with this distinction the limits are marked out in which we men have to keep ourselves with our thoughts for the time being, namely in this life. Further conclusions, which we think to be able to give, are based either on self-deception or on denial of the two factors in question. Either we deny the participation of God in the evil actions, in so far as they are actions (as, according to the report of Jerome, Pelagius is said to have said that he could move his hand, bend his finger, sit, stand and walk even without God's participation),¹⁴⁹²⁾ or we deny the evil in the human actions by charging it to God and abolishing the human responsibility. Both are contrary to Scripture as well as contrary to human experience. It is contrary to Scripture. For that the thief or the murderer cannot perform his actions without God's cooperation is clearly in Acts 17:28, where it is said of all men, including thieves and murderers, that they live, move and exist in God. It is contrary to experience, because the thief and the murderer hold themselves responsible for the evil of their actions in their conscience. All pantheistic phrases that man is not responsible for his actions because God provides existence, power and movement for them are refuted by the fact of the evil conscience.¹⁴⁹³⁾

4. The Divine permission of sin. [^](#)

It has been and is asked whether God's behavior toward the sin of man is to be described as "permission". However, Scripture also describes God's behavior toward the sins of men as permission (*permissio*), Ps. 81:13: "I have left them [the people of the Jews] in the stupor of their hearts"; Acts 14:16: εἰασε πάντα τὰ ἐθνη (the heathen) walk their own ways. So the expression "admission" is not objectionable. The Scripture

1492) In Quenstedt I, 782.

1493) Rom. 2:15; 1:32; Ps. 14:1, 5. Dr. L. T. Townsend, [Bible Theology and Modern Thought, 1883, p. 162](#): "A friend of Voltaire once wrote him these words: 'I have succeeded in getting rid of the idea of hell.' Voltaire replied: 'Allow me to congratulate you; I am far from that.'"

addresses it in this way. However, this does not fully describe God's activity with regard to sins. According to the Scriptures, God is also active in sins in the way that he rebukes sins with sins according to his punitive justice, Rom. 1:24, 28: διό (because of their idolatry) παρέδωκεν αυτοὺς ὁ θεός ... εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν, εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν. Especially also 2 Thess. 2:11-12: διὰ τοῦτο [namely, because they did not accept the love of the truth] πέμπει αὐτοῖς ὁ θεός ἐνέργειαν πλάνης εἰς τό πιστεῦσαι αὐτοῦς τῷ φενδει, ἵνα κριθῶσιν ἅπαντες οἱ μὴ πιστεύσαντες τῇ ἀληθείᾳ. (F. C. XI, 722, 83 [[Trigl. 1091, 83](#) ])

As far as God's involvement in good actions is concerned, it is to be noted on the basis of Scripture: 1. The civil good actions (*iustitia civilis*) in unbelievers God works according to his general world government through the natural conscience, Rom. 2:14: The heathen, who do not have God's law, do by nature (φύσει) the work of the law. This civil righteousness has great value in the kingdoms of this world because it makes possible the coexistence of men (civil society).¹⁴⁹⁴ 2) The spiritual good actions (*iustitia spiritualis*) God works in his kingdom of grace, that is, through the special action of the Holy Spirit in the Word. This effect is found only in faithful Christians, and indeed God works in Christians not merely the ability to do good (*potentiam agendi*), but also the act itself (*ipsum agendi actum*), Phil. 2:13: καὶ τό θέλειν καὶ τό ἐνεργεῖν. According to 2 Cor. 3:5, God also works the λογίζεσθαι, which belongs to the right direction of the ministry. Rom. 8:13 teaches that the actual killing of the business of the flesh is done πνεύματι θεοῦ.

The Divine Providence and human freedom. [^]

By having life, movement and existence only in God, men do not become machines, but remain moral beings, free from coercion (*libertas a coactione*), that is, responsible to God, or — which is the same thing — persons. The fact stands firm a. from Scripture, Acts 17:30: God judges the circle of the earth; the judgment of the world is based on the responsibility of men; b. from

1494) 1 Tim. 2:1, 2; Rom. 13:1-4. Cf. the section: "The Good Works of the Heathen", Vol. III, 52 ff.

experience, namely from the fact of conscience, Rom. 2:14-15: the thoughts that accuse or excuse one another; Rom. 1:32: sinners know that those who do these things are worthy of death. So the fact stands. But in this life it remains unknowable how this is possible with the omnipotence of God.

Included in this is the special question: Must the events in the world happen as they do (*necessitas immutabilitatis*), or can they also happen differently than they do (*contingentia rerum*)? According to Scripture, both necessity and contingency are to be noted, necessity from the point of view of divine providence, contingency from the human point of view. Examples for the necessity: Of Judas' betrayal and the killing of Christ on the part of the Jews and the heathen, Scripture says that they had to happen according to God's decree, Acts 4:27-28: They gathered together concerning thy holy child JESUM, Herod and Pontius Pilate with the heathen and the people of Israel, to do what thy hand and counsel had decreed beforehand that it should be done (προώριον γενέσθαι). Likewise, in reference to the capture of Christ, it is said Matt. 26:54: οὐτὼ δεῖ γενέσθαι. But the same events are also presented as contingent from the human point of view; for Christ, by warning Judas, sought to dissuade the Jewish people and Pilate from the betrayal and murder, Matt. 26:24: "The Son of Man is passing away, as it stands written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would be better for him that the same man had never been born." Christ's proceedings with Pilate also had the purpose of keeping Pilate from an unjust judgment. True, the Lord says, "He that delivered me unto thee hath greater sin." At the same time, however, the words contain the instruction and warning that Pilate also sins when he yields to the demand of the Jews. The words also make an impression on Pilate, because "from that time Pilate sought how he might let him go," Jn. 19:11-12. Therefore the precisely speaking ancient theologians say: *Ratione providentiae Dei, quae omnia regit, necessario omnia fieri recte dicuntur; respectu hominis libere et contingenter res fiunt et aguntur omnia in rebus humanis.* [[Google](#)]¹⁴⁹⁵⁾ These two ways of looking at events, taught in Scripture,

 1495) Cf. Heerbrand, *Compendium*, p. 214-216. Communicated in [Baier-Walther II, 176.](#)

must certainly be held so that, on the one hand, epicureanism and atheism (things happen without God), and, on the other hand, fatalism and stoicism (setting aside the means ordered by God) are kept out of the Christian religion. The following rule of life is to be kept: We men are to use the means in the world kingdom and in the kingdom of grace to which God has directed us, step by step, on our path of life. In bodily illness, for example, we use care and the help of the physician, and with regard to the attainment of salvation we use the means of grace through which God works faith and preservation in faith. To want to know the divine providence *a priori*, that is, setting aside the means ordered by God, is a foolish undertaking. We thereby enter a realm that is closed to our cognition in this life. We presume to investigate God in His mere majesty (in His *nuda maiestas*, Luther says).

This finds its application to the further special question of the *terminus vitae*. On the one hand, the doctrine teaches that the end of life of every man is immovable, Job 14:6: "Man has his certain time. ... You have set a goal; he will not pass it over." On the other hand, the Scriptures say just as clearly that human life is capable of prolongation and of shortening. Hezekiah prays to God for prolongation of his life, and his prayer is answered.¹⁴⁹⁶⁾ Regarding the shortening of life, it says Ps. 66:24 of the bloodthirsty and the false that they do not bring their life to the half. Both, the immovably fixed *terminus vitae* and its shortening and lengthening, are to be held as true. The former is spoken from God's point of view, the latter from the human point of view to which God condescends and according to which God directs us men to the means which he has arranged for our life here on earth. The contemplation of the end of our life from the divine point of view, setting aside the means ordered by God, is not suitable for the power of comprehension that we have in our life on earth. Therefore, it is God's will and order that we adhere to the means to which we are directed for the preservation and prolongation of our life. The exceptions, according to which God

1496) Is. 38:1 ff; 2 Kings 20:1 ff.

can sustain us even without means, we leave to Him.¹⁴⁹⁷⁾ As means ordered by God, the Scripture names: working (Ps. 128:2: "You will be fed by the work of your hands"; 2 Thess. 3:10: "If anyone does not want to work, he should not eat"), food (Acts 27:33-36: Paul admonishes the shipmen to take food to sustain their life), possibly also drink a little wine (1 Tim. 5:23), especially a pious life (Eph. 6:3: "that it may go well with you and that you may live long on earth") and prayer (Hezekiah, Is. 38:1 ff.), also fleeing from danger (Acts 9:23-25: Paul's escape from Damascus when the Jews wanted to kill him), etc. Because these means are ordered by God, they are made a part of the divine providence. This is still especially expressed Acts 27:31: "If these [the shipmen] abide not in the ship, ye cannot abide in life." By keeping or despising the means ordered by God, it comes to the *terminus vitae* that God has immovably established.¹⁴⁹⁸⁾

Angels. [^] (*De angelis.*)

The fact that modern theology has moved from the Scriptures into the ego of the theologizing subject is also clearly evident in its position on the Scriptural doctrine of angels. It takes a more or less radical position against the Christian doctrine of angels, depending on the consistency with which it allows the ego point of view to come into its own. The position of the liberal wing can be summarized as follows: That there are good angels is possible, but cannot be proven. That there are good angels is possible, but cannot be proven. In any case, the proof

1497) Ex. 34:28.

1498) Cf. here what was said above (p. 553 ff.) in the doctrine of God under "omniscience" about the infallible divine foreknowledge of all things and the right position to this fact. Cf. furthermore, in the doctrine of eternal election, the section: "The right consideration of eternal election" (Vol. III, p. 538 ff.). It may be pointed out here the diametrical contrast that exists between Luther and Calvin, although both speak of a "hidden" and "revealed" God. This contrast is explained in detail in [vol. II, p. 46 ff.](#)

for a personal devil is missing.¹⁴⁹⁹⁾ The more positive trend does not want "the idea of angels to be completely banished from the language of the religious view", but claims that the scriptural statements about angels are not sufficient for a "doctrine" of angels. To a "dogmatic" doctrine of the angels belongs the proof of an "inwardly necessary connection" with the "salvation experience" of the individual doing theology. Kirn says:¹⁵⁰⁰⁾ "Since an inwardly necessary connection of the Christian truth of salvation and salvation experience does not exist, dogmatics has no special doctrine of angels to establish." Yet there are recent theologians who advocate the assumption of both good and evil angels.¹⁵⁰¹⁾ It must be remembered, however, that the Christian

 1499) In Nitzsch-Stephan there is (p. 441 ff.) first a short correct representation of the "older Lutheran doctrine" of the angels. Then, however, under "Test and Result" it is said: "The reality of the angels cannot be declared impossible on the one hand, but on the other hand it cannot be proved either." Concerning the devil, it says p. 364: "The whole theory of the devil as the first fallen angel is only a dogmatic hypothesis." Karl Hase, as an aesthetic rationalist, relegates the doctrine of angels to the realm of poetry, superstition, and church art. (*Ev. Dogmatik* 4, p. 192 f.)

1500) Ev. Dogmatik 3, p. 72.

1501) Also in Nitzsch-Stephan especially Kähler and Schlatter are quoted, p. 445: "Today's conservative dogmatics speaks little of the angels, although it holds their existence out of faithfulness against the Scriptures. ... Kähler thinks that with the confidence in the independence of one's own personal existence from the sensuous breath of life, at the same time the view of the supernatural kingdom of personal creatures opens up, whose existence and influence in the history of mankind holds the balance to that preponderance of material existence [is somewhat darkly expressed]; they serve God in his providence and revelation, but not as mediators of the religious relationship of men from God [very correct], but only as means of intercourse with men in the historical revelation. (*Lehre*, p. 267 f.) Schlatter ... the idea of angels clarifies the glory of God; God must be greater than the world we can experience. The remembrance of this urges us to suppose an unfolding of creative power not limited out of nature and man [the reasoning is too subjective], and the statement of Scripture entitles us to go beyond the thought of a mere possibility'. 'The mystery is near to us.' (*Dogma*, p. 92 f.) p. 361: "Conservative theology still carries forward a doctrine of Satan. It does so out of loyalty to Jesus as the teacher, 'who experiences in a measure different from ours the reality of the powers beyond' (Schlatter, *Dogma*, p. 279), and whose self-statements are indissolubly linked with propositions about the prince of this world, his angels, and their seductive activity (Kähler, *Lehre*, p. 308); moreover, in the conviction that the origin of human sin becomes comprehensible only through the assumption of a satanic

doctrine of angels can only be known and taught from the Scriptures as God's infallible Word. We deceive ourselves if we think that we can develop the Christian doctrine of angels completely or partly with "inner necessity" from our ego, even apart from the revelation in the Scriptures.

The newer theologians, who reject a "dogmatic" doctrine of the angels, justify this, as said, with the remark that the doctrine of angels does not occupy a central position within the Christian revelation of salvation. Thus Kirn says:¹⁵⁰²⁾ "We cannot reckon the angel doctrine to be part of the essential content of the revelation of salvation itself and have to leave its use to religious tact." It has already been pointed out under the section "Non-Fundamental Doctrines" (p. 102 f.) that and why the doctrine of angels is admittedly not to be classified as a fundamental article. Faith, which places one in the community of God's grace, has as its object not the existence of angels and their ministries, but Christ crucified in his *satisfactio vicaria*, 1 Cor. 2:2; 15:3. At all times men have become Christians without having heard or known that angels exist. But if a man has become a Christian and now reads the Bible, he will find, from Genesis to the Revelation of John, besides the central doctrine of Christ, the Savior of sinners, also the doctrine of angels. And it must be with great inconsistency that he holds the doctrine of Christ, but rejects the doctrine of the angels as untrustworthy. The fact that modern theologians think that they can easily bind the denial of the Christian doctrine of angels with the "Christian experience of salvation" is mostly due to the fact that they have a wrong concept of the Christian experience of salvation. To all those who deny the *satisfactio Christi vicaria*, the Christian salvation experience is consequently *terra incognita*.

background." — All the more recent theologians who want to convert the personal devil into the "idea" of evil (rationalists, Schleiermacher, also Kirn), Strauß refuted from his standpoint of complete unbelief with these words (quoted in Luthardt, *Comp. 10, p. 155*): "The demons are to be understood as necessary components of the whole worldview of Jesus and the apostles"; "if Christ came to destroy the works of the devil, he did not need to come if there was no devil; if there is a devil, but only as a personification of the evil principle, — well, a Christ as an impersonal idea is also sufficient".

1502) op. cit., p. 73.

1. The existence of the angels and the time of their creation. [^](#)

That there are angels, the scripture testifies, as was already noted, from Genesis to the Apocalypse. By these scriptural testimonies and not by reasons of probability, we believe the existence of the angels and there is a doctrine of the angels within the Christian church. — As for the time of the creation of the angels, it falls within the six-day work. The angels were not created before the world, because before the world there was only God, Jn. 1:1-3. They were not created after the world, because after the creation of the world God ceased to create, Gen. 2:2-3.¹⁵⁰³⁾ But on which day within the work of six days the angels were created cannot be determined with certainty, because there are no scriptural statements about it.¹⁵⁰⁴⁾

2. The name of the angels. [^](#)

"Angel" (ἄγγελος [HEBREW], ἄγγελος) is an official name (*nomen officii*), not a designation of the nature of angels. We have a designation of the essence or nature of the angels in the word "spirit" (πνεῦμα), as will be further explained. That the name "angel" is an official name, denoting a messenger or messengers, is evident from the fact that men also, especially the preachers of the Word of God, are called angels in the Scriptures. Mal. 2:7: "The lips of the priest shall keep the doctrine, that the law may be sought out of his mouth: for he is an angel of the Lord of hosts." Likewise, John the Baptist is called God's "angel."¹⁵⁰⁵⁾ Christ himself bears the name "angel of the covenant" as the messenger of God κατ' ἐξοχήν.¹⁵⁰⁶⁾ The question when by the "angel of the Lord" in the Old Testament the *Angelus increatus*, Christ, is to be understood, was treated at the doctrine of God.¹⁵⁰⁷⁾

1503) Gerhard remarks, *Loci, L. De Creatione et Angelis*, § 39, against church fathers who assumed the creation of the angels before the world: *Scriptura per spatium antemundanum semper intelligit aeternitatem, ut patet ex Ps. 90; Prov. 8; Ioh. 1 et aliis Scripturae locis. Iam vero angelis non competit aeternitas.*

1504) Cf. Luther on Gen. 1:6, [St. L. I, 27 f.](#) [Gerhard](#), 1. s., § 40: [Quo die angeli sint conditi, scrupulose magis quam utiliter quaeritur.](#)

1505) Mal. 3:1; Matt. 11:10.

1506) Mal. 3:1; Jn. 3:17, 34; 6:40; Gal. 4:4-6.

1507) p. 477 ff. In summary, [Gerhard](#), *Loci, L. De Creatione et Angelis*, § 37: [Quotiescunque vel nomen Iehovae vel divina opera et divinus cultus angelo in Scriptura tribuatur, ibi intelligendus Dei Filius.](#)

3. Nature and abilities of the angels. [^]

The angels are spirits (πνεύματά), that is, immaterial beings. That we must not ascribe to themselves a subtle (ethereal) corporeality is evident from Luke 24:39. In this passage Christ defines what a spirit is. When the disciples took Him for a spirit at an appearance after His resurrection, He instructed them: "A spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see that I have." According to this, being a spirit stands in perfect opposition (*oppositio adaequata*) to all corporeality (even the subtle or transfigured). The same thing comes to be said of the nature or essence of the evil angels, when it is said Eph. 6:12, "We have not to contend with flesh and blood." There is therefore no scriptural ground when church fathers, etc., and also more recent theologians ascribe to themselves a fine body in various proximities.¹⁵⁰⁸⁾ The bodies, in which the in themselves bodiless and invisible angels appeared on certain occasions (e.g. Gen. 18 and 19), we may therefore only understand as temporarily assumed figures, which did not belong to their nature (*unio accidentalis*) and only served the purpose of the temporary visualization. As for the eating of the angels (Gen. 18:8; 19:3), we are not justified to take it as a mere appearance. It was not, of course, for the nourishment of the assumed body, which had no need of such food, but it was for the purpose of intercourse with men, and the food was consumed in a manner not comprehensible to us, about as, say dogmatists, food is consumed by fire.¹⁵⁰⁹⁾ In the doctrine of God

 1508) A detailed antithesis in Quenstedt I, 658 sqq. Hollaz also treats the antithesis in detail, *Examen*, P. I, c. IV. IV, qu. 3, after the Thesis: *Angeli sunt spiritus omnis materiae, tam crassioris quam subtilioris, expertes*. Walther against the newer theologians who ascribe a corporeality to the angels, L. u. W. 22, 166 ff. The longer quotation from Kurtz's "Bible and Astronomy" 2, pp. 78-84 [Ed. — English edition The Bible and Astronomy here], to which Walther's criticism is particularly opposed, is also reprinted Baier-Walther II, 108 f. Kurtz has stooped to the assertion [see English edition here]: "Within the creature, corporeality is the condition of all existence, the organ of all activity, the foil of the spirit; through it the creature receives its limitation, its certainty, and its holding point; without it it would blur and dissolve without attitude." Where does that leave the almighty God? Cf. also what was said about the "intermediate body" of the departed souls, Vol. III, 8. 577 f. Philippi, Glaubenslehre 3 II, 296 ff, also opposes the angelic body.

1509) Jn. Adam Osiander, *Colleg. Theol.* II, 165; in Baier-Walther II, 109: *Homines edunt et bibunt ob egestatem, angeli autem*

it has already been recalled¹⁵¹⁰) that there is an infinite distance between God as πνεῦμα (John 4:24) and the angels as πνεύματα (Hebrews 1:14), since the angels are finite spirits and creatures. The angels differ from the immaterial human soul in that they are complete beings as spirits, *spiritus completi*, while the human soul is *spiritus incompletus*, because to the complete man belongs also the body as an integrating component.

As far as the abilities of the angels are concerned, the Scriptures ascribe to them, both the good and the bad ones, cognition (*intellectus*) and volition (*voluntas*). The good angels recognize the manifold wisdom of God in the church (Eph. 3:10) and are willing servants of those who are to inherit salvation, Hebr. 1:14. That the evil angels also have intellect and will is evident from the temptation through which the devil approached Eve (Gen. 3) and Christ (Matt. 4). From the Scriptures it also stands that the angels, although immaterial, have the ability (*potentia*) to act outwardly (on bodies). Angels take Lot and his wife and daughters by the hand, Gen. 19:16, and the devil leads Christ with him into the Holy City and places him on the pinnacle of the temple, Matt. 4:5. An analogy for this

instar flammae consumunt cibum ob potentiam. [„Men eat and drink because of want, but angels like flames consume food because of power.“] Brochmand speaks extensively about the eating of the angels, saying that unnecessary difficulties are made here, and recalls the analogy of the eating of Christ after the resurrection. He says: *Non ignoro, inveniri, qui hic nodum in scirpo quaerant. Sunt enim, qui contendunt, angelos vere non obire in assumptis corporibus munia vitalia, sed tantum in speciem, ita ut angeli visi fuerint Abrahamo et Lotho comedere, cum tamen revera non comederint. ... Non necessarium esse ad veram comestionem, ut cibus in ventriculo concoquatur et in succum sanguinemque vertatur, testis locuples est Christus, Luc. 24:41-43, qui post resurrectionem ad confirmandam resurrectionis suae veritatem coram discipulis suis comedit, utut cibus in nutrimentum non sit conversus, hoc enim corporis glorificati natura non permittebat, Luc. 20:36. Frustra vero regeritur, corpora ab angelis assumpta non fuisse vere vitalia. Nam licet non vivificabantur ab anima, virtute tamen angelorum singulari ita afficiebantur, ut apta essent, per quae loquela, tactus, motus et similia viventium opera exercerentur. Hoc addimus, disputari a patribus et doctoribus scholasticis, an corpora, quibus induti angeli apparuerunt, ex nihilo a Deo creata sint, an vero ex praeexistente materia ab ipsis angelis formata et assumpta sint. Verum hic meam libens fateor ignorantiam.* [[Google](#)] (*System. Univ. Theol.*, art. 8, c. 2, q. 2, f. 98; in [Baier-Walther II, 113 sq.](#))

1510) p. 537 f.

we have in the effect of the immaterial human soul on the material human body. The how is beyond our human imagination. More about this under the sections "The good angels and their actions" and "The bad angels and their actions". Only it is to be remembered what was already explained in the doctrine of God, that the angels do not know all things and especially also future things (from themselves), because *omniscientia* and *praescientia* only belong to God. The angels also do not know the thoughts of men, because this is also a prerogative of God, 1 Kings 8:39.¹⁵¹¹⁾

The power of the angels is very great, which is evident from the predicates attached to them in Scripture (Ps. 103:20: strong heroes, גִּבְרֵי בָּתָּא [HEBREW] Thess. 1:7: ἀγγελοι δυνάμεως αντων, namely Christ; Matt. 12:29: ισχυρός etc). It is a power that surpasses the power of men (superhuman power). The good angels, as protectors of men, are stronger than those protected by them, Ps. 91:11-13. The evil angels are stronger than men because the devil keeps all unbelievers safely imprisoned in his kingdom (Luke 11:21-22), but the believers can withstand the attacks of the devil only in God's power, Eph. 6:10-17. However, the power of the angels is not infinite and is subject to the power of God at any time. The question of whether the devils can perform miracles has been dealt with here. The dogmatists answer this with a distinction. The devils cannot do real miracles, e.g., cannot create new things, cannot raise the dead, etc., because the Scriptures ascribe this to God alone and to His almighty power; Ps. 72:18: "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who alone doeth wonders." But the devils, under God's permission and judgment, can do things that appear to men as miracles, because men lack comprehensive insight into the realm of spirits and especially into the power and ability of spirits. Thus the Scripture expressly says that the anti-Christian procures an appendage among men, "after the working of Satan with all manner of lying powers and signs and wonders," εν ηράσῃ} δυνάμει και σημείοις και τέρασιν ψεύδους, 2 Thess. 2:9. And that this is out of God's judgment is added in the words, " Therefore [because they have

 1511) [Baier II, 111: *De cogitationibus hominum occultis angeli non nisi ex signis aut effectibus collectam opinionem \[Conjecture\] habent.*](#)

not embraced the love of truth] God will send them strong error, that they may believe the lie, that they all may be judged who do not believe the truth, but delight in unrighteousness," vv. 10-12.¹⁵¹²⁾ Dogmatists distinguish between *miracula* and *mirabilia seu mira*.

It belongs to the realm of fable that the angels can enter into marriages with the men, as also newer theologians wanted to teach again by calling on Gen. 6:2: "The children of God looked after the daughters of men as they were beautiful, and took as wives whom they wished." The Scriptures refer to it as a characteristic of angels that they are neither free nor allow themselves to be free, Matt. 22:30.¹⁵¹³⁾

1512) Quenstedt deals with the power of angels in great detail under a special *Quae et quanta sit angelorum potentia*, I, 666 sqq.

1513) Cf. about newer theologians, who have assumed angelic marriages on the basis of Gen. 6:2, the quotations from Kurtz' "Die Ehen der Söhne Gottes mit den Töchtern der Menschen", Berlin 1857; p. 1. 11 ff. — Rightly, August Pfeiffer in his *Dubia Vexata* 2, p. 59 sq., refers against angelic marriages both to Matt. 22:30 as well as to Acts 17:26. In the words Matt. 22:30: "In the resurrection they [men] shall neither be free nor allowed to be free, but they shall be as the angels of God," a twofold thing is said: 1. That the conjugal life among men belongs to this life on earth, but in the resurrection, that is, in the life after this life, it no longer takes place; 2. That men are like the angels of God in this respect, namely, in that they are neither free nor allowed to be free, by which it is said: As it belongs to the nature of the angels that they are neither free nor allowed to be free, so it also belongs to the nature of men that for them "in the resurrection" the conjugal life ceases. In short, in the argument it is taken for granted that there is no such thing as angelic marriage. Pfeiffer expresses it thus: *Repugnat naturae angelicae*. — Furthermore, Pfeiffer rightly refers to Acts 17:26, where it is said that all men who have ever lived, are now living, and will live until the Last Day, are descended from one blood (ἐξ ἐνὸς αἱματος), namely from Adam. Assuming, however, that according to Gen. 6:2 the angels entered into marriages with the men, the human race would be mixed with "angel blood" and represent a kind of half-breed race. In order to weaken this argument, some have reinterpreted the text words of Gen. 6:2 as if only an occasional mixing of the angels with the men is addressed there. Also this would have already brought "angel blood" into the human race and contradict the ἐξ ἐνὸς αἱματος. But the words Gen. 6:2: "They took to wives (נָשִׁים) [**HEBREW**] whom they would" denote a regular and permanent married life. The defenders of the confinement fiefdoms, who do not want to go that far, have no right to refer to Gen. 6:2. — But also the context of Gen. 6:2 completely excludes close fiefdoms.

About the relationship of the angels to the place we can say this much, that they can be in a certain place (like the angel with Peter in prison, Acts 12:7), but as immaterial beings they are non-spatial in the sense that they do not occupy any space and can be where there is already another body. Quenstedt:¹⁵¹⁴⁾ *Coexistunt loco corporeo vel corpori*. Of course, angels do not have omnipresence, but are only in one certain place at a certain time. They are, as dogmatists put it, somewhere (πov), which "somewhere" can be determined.

In the immediately preceding passage, v. 1, only men are addressed: "when men began to multiply on the earth and to beget daughters for them. Likewise, in the immediately following, namely v. 3, only men are addressed: "Then the Lord said, 'Men will no longer let my spirit rebuke them, for they are flesh. I will yet give them term an hundred and twenty years.'" Likewise in the following verses, 5-7: "When the Lord saw that the wickedness of men was great in the earth, ... then it repented him that he had made men, ... and said: I will destroy man which I have created from off the earth, from man even unto cattle." In short, in the whole setting of Gen. 6:2, in the preceding and in the following context, the address is only of men, never of angels or angelic men (half-breeds). — But the use of language! Does not the expression "the children of God" prove angelic fiefdoms? As to the appeal to the usage of language, that בְּנֵי-הָאֱלֹהִים [HEBREW] always denotes angels only, Ströbel, in the advertisement of Kurtz's "Marriages of the Sons of God with the Daughters of Men," describes the state of affairs thus: "Moses very frequently addresses angels, but never calls them 'sons of God.' So, he also speaks not seldom of 'sons [children] of God', but every time he understands men by it. The designation of angels as 'sons of God' is a usage quite unknown before David's time and after Daniel's time, and to want to find this designation already in Genesis is an anachronistic psbido principii." (Quoted in L. u. W. 5, 188 from Rudelbach-Guericke's publication 1859.) Cf. also Philippi's detailed exposition (Glaubenslehre 3, pp. 182-192) with the result: "For the relation of *Bne Elohim* to the Sethites [not to angels] the context seems to us irrefutably decisive. This even Delitzsch acknowledges; cf. Genesis, p. 225, third edition, p. 232, although for his part he prefers the angelic interpretation held only by several exegetes of the first centuries and of modern times (cf. especially Hofmann, Schriftbeweis 2 I, p. 424 f., and Kurtz, "Die Ehen der Söhne Gottes mit den Töchtern der Menschen"). August Pfeiffer l. c. reached the same result as Philippi: *Filii Dei, qui uxores ducunt et generant, non sunt angeli boni, nedum mali, sed homines pii eorumque posterii, qui, licet hic desciverint, dicuntur tamen filii Dei tum a statu priori, tum ob externam societatem cum vera ecclesia*. [[Google](#)]

1514) *Systema* I, 633.

The human soul can serve as an example. The immaterial human soul does not occupy any space either, and yet we can indicate where it is. In a still living man it is not outside the body, but in it; Acts 20:10: "Make no tumult, for his soul is in him."¹⁵¹⁵

4. Number of angels and differences among them. [^](#)

The number of angels is very great; Dan. 7:10: "A thousand times thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him"; Luke 2:13: πλήθος στρατιᾶς ουρανίου). That we are not able to give the exact number of angels, the Scripture itself says when it addresses "myriads" of angels (Heb. 12:22) and Dan. 7:10 uses the expression a thousand times a thousand and ten thousand times ten thousand. Keil:¹⁵¹⁶ "expression for the uncountable multitude of angels that surround God ministering; cf. Deut. 33:2; Ps. 68:18."

That there are orders among the angels is evident from the different names that are attached to them in Scripture. In the Scriptures Cherubim (Gen. 3:24; Ps. 80:2), Seraphim (Isa 6:2), θρόνοι, κυριότητες, (Col. 1:16), ἀρχάγγελος 1 Thess. 4:16) are mentioned. That there is also superordination and subordination among the evil angels is evident from Matt. 25:41: ὁ διάβολος καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ. Luke 11:15. 18-19: Βεελζεβουλ ὁ ἀρχὼν τῶν δαιμόνων. But we cannot determine the number of orders and their exact difference, because the indications of Scripture are not sufficient for this purpose. Luther and dogmatists reject the nine

1515) Quenstedt 1, 134: *Tribuitur angelis πον seu ubi, in quo angelus est definitiva. Sunt enim angeli in certo spatio per designationem seu definitive, h. e., eorum substantialis, non virtualis praesentia aliquo spatio definitur, ut ibi, non in aliis spatiis, nedum ubique sint.* [[Google](#)] They can also misplace their πον. Baier-Walther II, 117: *Angelos non dicimus esse ubique, sed in certo quodam et definito πον, quod vocant, ita ut etiam ab uno ubi ad alterum sese movere possint et res materiales aliorum movere. Vid. Matt. 8:32, ubi daemones ex homine obsesso, in quo aliquamdiu fuerant, eiecti et in gregem porcorum demigrantes, totum hunc gregem praecipitem egerunt in mare.* [[Google](#)]

1516) In the commentary on this passage.

orders of angels or choirs with their subdivisions (*terniones*) as uncertain..¹⁵¹⁷ It is also rightly pointed out that the order of the angels is changed, as can be seen in a comparison of Col. 1:16 and Eph. 1:21.

5. Good and evil angels. [^]

All angels were originally created by God positively good, not merely indifferent or even with an inclination to evil. Since we must understand the creation of the angels as having taken place within the six-day work, we cannot avoid referring God's testimony "very good" (Gen. 1:31) to the angels as well. That there are now two classes of angels, good and bad, comes from the fact that a part of the angels did not remain in the *status originalis*, but fell away from God, thus into sin. If we also translate Jn. 8:44 the εστηκε not: "He [the devil] is not existed in the truth", but: "He does not stand in the truth", so the case is nevertheless not denied, but taken for granted.¹⁵¹⁸ The good angels are those who have remained good in the fall of others and have been so confirmed in goodness by God's further work (*in bono confirmati*) that they can no longer fall away. This *status* of *non posse peccare* is not to be declared an "invention", but to be recognized as a self-evident presupposition. God would not have appointed the angels for the service of those who are to inherit the salvation, if the angels themselves were not perfectly safe servants and protectors. The evil angels are those who became evil by apostasy from God and cannot become good anymore (*in malo confirmati*). If at pretty much all times the opinion has been expressed that even the could still convert and be delivered from eternal

 1517) Luther, [St. L. I, 27](#): "Therefore it came about that, after people had nothing certain about it [from the Scriptures], that they invented the nine choirs of angels, and that there were so many of them that their fall granted nine days. ... But so it goes: where one has no public and certain testimonies of the Scriptures, there rash and presumptuous people commonly think that they have power to write poetry and to conceive what they desire." Quenstedt I, 681: *Esse determinate novem ordines sive choros angelorum, hosque in tres classes seu terniones, quas hierarchias vocant, esse divisos — de quibus ex Pseudo-Dionysio Areopagita scholastici et pontificii, praesertim Becanus, multis philosophantur — ut incerta et falsa reiicimus.* [[Google](#)]

1518) So correctly Luthardt on the passage in Zöckler's commentary.

damnation, the devils themselves know better, Matt. 8:29: "Hast thou come hither to torment us before the time?" The fire prepared for the devil and his angels is το πυρ το αιώνιον, Matt. 25:41. — When a part of the angels fell cannot be exactly determined. It is certain that the fall of the angels occurred before the fall of men, because men fell through the seduction of the devil (Gen. 3:1-14; John 8:44: the devil is ἀνθρωποκτόνος ["man-killer"]). Nor do we get beyond conjecture with respect to the particular sin by which the devil apostasized from God. Most probably take pride as the original sin.¹⁵¹⁹⁾

6. The good angels and their accomplishments. ^

The good angels, as we saw, are confirmed in goodness and stand in the state of salvation. Their salvation consists in seeing God. Also during their service on earth they always look at God's face, Matt. 18:10, 18:10. The most intimate love for God is inseparably bound up with seeing God. Whoever beholds God cannot help but love him as the 'highest good. Thus the will of the good angels is also unceasingly and completely directed toward the good, and their actions actually move only in the realm of the good. The objection that the good angels are not "morally free" if they can no longer sin is based on a perverse concept of moral freedom. One wants to call moral beings morally free only if they can do evil as well as good. According to this, there would be no "moral freedom" in heaven and in eternity, because the saved men, radiated and transfigured by God's glory ("The justified will shine like the sun," Matt. 13:43), can no longer sin. — Because the Scriptures also tell us

 1519) Quenstedt I, 729: *Superbiam fuisse primum angelorum peccatum, probabiliter colligitur: l.ex 1 Tim. 3:6: 'Ne inflatus', τῷ θεῷ (Vulg.: in superbiam elatus), 'in condemnationem incidat diaboli', h. e., ne in eandem incurrat damnationem, quam ipse Satan per arrogantiam pertulit. Ita Chrysostomus, Gerhardus, alii; ... 2, ex tentatione, qua Satan primis parentibus superbiae peccatum instillare ausus fuit, ut scilicet affectarent aequalitatem cum Deo; eritis, inquit, sicut Dii [Deus]; 3. ex perpetuo conatu, quo Dei gloriam in se transferre studet. ... Probatur haec sententia etiam a b. Luthero in Gen. 1. Basilius Magnus, Cyprianus et Bernhardus invidiam superbiae iugunt. [[Google](#)]*

tells us about "chosen angels" (1 Thess. 6:21: οἱ ἐκλεκτοὶ Ἄγγελοι), we can also speak of an election of the angels, although the Scriptures do not describe this election in detail. But from the Scriptures it is certain, 1. that the good angels were not chosen because of the merit of Christ, since they did not become sinners (Heb. 2:16), 2. that the evil angels are not absolutely, but rejected because of their apostasy (2 Petr. 2:4: Ὁ θεὸς ἀγγέλων ἀμαρτηόντων οὐκ ἐφείσατο). To extend the redemptive work of Christ with papists and Calvinists also to the angels is done without scriptural ground.¹⁵²⁰

The duties of the good angels are: To praise God (Is 6:3; Luke 2:13) and to be His servants in the world and in the church (Ps. 104:4; 103:20, 21; Hebr 1:14); not as if God needs the service of the angels, but because it pleases God so (*non ex quadam Dei indigentia, sed ex voluntate Dei libera*).¹⁵²¹ In particular, Scripture reveals that God appoints angels to minister to children (Matt. 18:10), to believers in their calling (Ps. 91:11-12), to the dying (Luke 16:22). The theologians do not want to answer the question whether every Christian has his own guardian angel, because passages like Matt. 18:10 and Acts 12:15 are not sufficient for a stringent proof.¹⁵²² — The Scriptures teach very clearly that the angels are intensely interested in all processes in the church. Not only is the mystery of redemption an object of wonder and adoration for them (Luke 2:13; 1 Pet 1:12; Eph 3:10), but they also rejoice over every sinner who repents (Luke 15:10). Scripture also mentions the presence and ministry of angels in all the main events in the Kingdom of God. The angels were at the legislation at Sinai (Deut. 33:2; Gal. 3:19).

1520) The more detailed explanation vol. II, p. 456 f., note 1064.

1521) Hofmann thinks that God needs the angels "to make himself present to his world". (In [Baier-Walther II, 163 f.](#), from [Schriftbeweis I, 282 ff.](#)).

1522) Quenstedt has a special *quaestio* about this I, 686 sqq.: *An cuilibet pio angelus certus in custodiam divinitus datus sit?* He answers: *Non unum saltem, sed plures angelos bonos singulis fidelibus in custodiam datos esse recte ex Scriptura colligitur; an vero unicuique fidelium inde ab ortu suo certus angelus custos, ... itemque, an cura et gubernatio ecclesiae certis angelis demandata sit, atque an unicuique provinciae peculiaris praesit angelus, partim incertum, partim falsum est.* [[Google](#)]

They proclaim the conception, the birth, the resurrection, the return of Christ¹⁵²³) They are ministers at the Last Judgment (Matt. 13:41 f.; 24:31 etc.). Scripture also reveals that the angels are present at the public worship services (1 Cor. 11:10). That the angels are also active in maintaining the household and civil order, we see from passages like Gen. 24:7; Matt. 18:10; Dan. 10:13. Because of these tasks we should not consider the angels "superfluous" (with newer theologians), but rejoice and comfort ourselves in their service, also be shy to arouse their displeasure (1 Cor. 11:10; 1 Tim. 5:21¹⁵²⁴), but in no way show them religious reverence (*cultus religiosus*), do not pray to them etc., because they are and remain creatures. They themselves protest against this (Revelation 22:8-9).¹⁵²⁵)

7. The evil angels, their deeds and their eternal punishment. ^

With the question why God did not send a Savior to the fallen angels as well as to the fallen men, we enter a mysterious area. Quenstedt gives reasons of probability (*probabiles rationes*), among which probably the best known is that the devil fell without seduction, man by seduction.¹⁵²⁶) But we have to be careful that we do not touch the free mercy with which God has taken care of men. A question that is often discussed is how the devil's intelligence (*vis intelligendi, intellectus*) is to be assessed, since the Scripture on the one hand says that he is very cunning (Gen. 3:1 ff.; 2 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 6:11), and on the other hand reports the great foolishness of him, that he is responsible for the death of Christ, by which he is thrown out of his kingdom. Christ expressly says before His death passage and for the interpretation of it: "Now the prince of this world will be cast out," ἐκβληθήσεται

1523) Luke 1:26; 2:9; 28:5 ff; Acts 1:10 ff.

1524) Cf. [Baier on these passages, II. 128.](#)

1525) Cf. Quenstedt I, 686 sqq, especially the *Antithesis Scholasticorum et Pontificiorum*. Further, [Günther, Symbolik 4, p. 266](#) f. It should be noted that the expression *προσκυνεῖν* is used both to designate civil reverence, the *cultus civilis*, and to designate the *cultus divinus* in Scripture. From this homonym the papists seek to capitalize for their *veneratio et invocatio angelorum*. The papacy proves its pagan nature also in this.

1526) *Systema* I. 829.

εξω, Jn. 12:31. We also have to accept that the prophecies of the Old Testament from Gen. 3:15 to Is. 53 and beyond together with the consequences for him (the devil) were not unknown. A probable explanation we have in the assumption that the devil's hatred against everything that is God and God's was so great that it blinded the mind. The will directed toward evil put the mind out of action.¹⁵²⁷⁾ We have an analogue for this in the human enmity against the gospel, which has its primary seat in the love of evil (John 3:19-20) and directs the mind, that is, puts it out of action. Every contradiction against the divine truth, including the contradiction against the *satisfactio vicaria* and the inspiration of the Scriptures (verbal inspiration), can be clearly proven as lack of understanding.

This brings us to the operations (*operationes*) of the evil angels. For our instruction and warning, the Scriptures describe these operations very clearly and in detail. The actions of the evil angels are directed to harm the body of the man (Luke 13:11, 16) as well as the earthly goods (Job 1:12 ff.; Matt 8:31-32), but especially the soul (1 Petr 5:8-9). The whole status of unbelief (*status incredulitatis*) — in the Gentile world and within the outer Christianity — is an effect of the devil (Eph. 2:1-2). All who do not believe the gospel of Christ think and do what the devil wants because they are in his power, *εξουαία* (Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13). Also, that they do not know this, indeed, deny the existence of the devil, is an effect of the devil. It is scriptural terminology to call the *status* of all those who do not believe that Christ's blood alone makes us clean from all sin *obsessio spiritualis*. If we want to reserve this expression for special cases and persons, namely for an increased effect of the devil, which we perceive in individual persons (Judas) and at special times,¹⁵²⁸⁾ we must not deny that every

1527) Cf. on this point also Pd. II, 81.

1528) In addition to Judas, each time the pope as the man of sin and the child of perdition in his function as the κατ' ἐξοχήν who sits down in the temple of God as a god and pretends to be God (2 Thess. 2). The French Revolution at the end of the 18th century, which is often cited as an example of the heightened *obsessio spiritualis*, is matched by recent events (the activities of the Communists and many Socialists, also

unbeliever is completely in the power of Satan until God's grace and power delivers him from the authority of darkness and transfers him to the kingdom of His dear Son (Col. 1:13). Spiritual possession does not abolish personal responsibility (Matt. 25:41); neither does it abolish free will, conceived as freedom from compulsion, because the unbeliever willingly does not want the gospel and gladly does evil. Spiritual obsession is to be distinguished from bodily obsession (*obsessio corporalis*). This can also come upon children of God (Mark 5:6, 18:19; Luke 8:28, 38:39,¹⁵²⁹) and is present when the devil, under God's permission, takes possession of a man not merely in effect but also in essence (κατ' ουσίαν) in such a way that the man becomes a reasonless and will-less instrument of the evil spirit. The human personality is suspended in its activity, and the devil in his own person (αυτοπροσώπως) is the acting subject.¹⁵³⁰ The bodily possession cancels the personal responsibility.¹⁵³¹

The Scriptures describe the activity of the evil angels against the church. According to Matt. 16:18, the πύλαι αδου stand in continual battle against the church, and it is only through Christ that it is preserved against the onslaught of the infernal power. Behind everything that harms the church stand the evil spirits. Their work is the carelessness of the hearers of the Word of God (Luke 8:12) as well as the falsification of the divine doctrine that Christ wants to have taught purely in His church (Matt. 13:25: "While the people slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went away"; 1 Tim. 4:1 ff: δώασκαλῖαι δαιμόνων). In particular, the papacy is seen as a masterpiece of the devil within the

of the deliberately untruthful statesmen and their accomplices, the newspaper editors during and after the World War). As examples of the increased *obsessio spiritualis* also such representatives of the "science" are considered rightly, who storm as furiously against the Christian church and the Word of God. [See [C.D. I, p. 509, fn# 18](#)]

1529) Cf. also Nösgen on these passages in Zöckler's commentary.

1530) Cf. on *obsessio spiritualis* and *corporalis* the quotations in [Baier-Walther II, 136 ff.](#); furthermore, on bodily possession, in what it consists, on whom it comes, its signs of recognition and its treatment Walther, [Pastorale, p. 293 ff.](#)

1531) [Fecht](#) therefore points out (in Walther, [Pastorale, p. 295](#)) "that the possessed, if he is faithful, is to be reproached in light hours that the blasphemous speeches and the like foamed out by Satan through him in the paroxysm would not be imputed to him".

Church described (2 Thess. 2). We do not have the biblical judgment on false doctrine as long as we do not consider it to be the work of the devil. We also have to consider the persecutions and oppressions of the church on the part of the state and individual societies in the state as an effect of the evil spirits.¹⁵³²⁾

Just as the devil constantly disputes the church, he is also an enemy of the divine order of the state and the family. He seduces David to take a census (1 Chron. 22:1) and Ahab to wage war against the Syrians (1 Kings 22:21, 22). He brings about marriage prohibitions (1 Tim. 4:1, 2) and tempts spouses to infidelity (1 Cor. 7:5). Scripture also tells us that God uses the evil angels not only to punish the wicked who have not accepted the love of truth (2 Thess. 2:11, 12), but also to chastise the pious, as we see in the example of Job (Job 1:7 ff.) and the apostle Paul (2 Cor. 12:7).

The punishment of the evil angels is their eternal torment in the hellish fire (Matt. 25:41). We can leave unanswered the question how this fire is constituted (whether material or immaterial).¹⁵³³⁾ The same applies to the question of how fire can affect spirits, because the fact of the effect is certain. Whoever denies the eternal punishment of the evil angels and the men who are finally [*finaliter*] seduced by them, must consequently also deny the eternal salvation (Matt. 25:46) and thus the whole Christian religion (1 Cor. 15:19). To think of the eternal fire as a purification fire or also as a destruction fire, as for godless men, so also for the evil angels, contradicts the Scriptures. Again, let it be remembered that all that Scripture says about the evil angels and their eternal rebuke is in the service of divine mercy. It has the purpose of reminding men of the necessity of repentance and faith in Him who with His blood bought men not for hell but for heaven.

 1532) We are also thinking of the fight we had to wage against the legislation of individual states for our Christian congregational schools. Despite the decision of the United States Supreme Court in our favor, hostility is stirring anew (presently again in Oregon and Iowans).

1533) For more on this, see Vol. III, 613 f., under the section "Eternal damnation."

The doctrines of man. [^] (*Anthropologia.*)

According to the facts we consider the man A. before the fall (*in statu integritatis*), B. after the fall (*in statu peccati*).

A. Man before the fall. [^] (*De statu hominis ante lapsum.*)

1. Created in the divine image. [^]

The original state of man is generally described by the predicate "very good" (Gen. 1:31). But this predicate comes also to all other creatures. The more detailed description of the good nature that belongs to man in contrast to all other creatures is contained in the statement that God created man in His (God's) image, Gen. 1:26-27: נִצְּשָׁה אֱדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ [HEBREW].¹⁵³⁴⁾

1534) Details for the determination of the divine image. 1. The question has been discussed whether v. 26 צֶלֶם ["image"] and XXXX ["likeness"] denote different things or the same thing. Those who assume the former have determined the difference in such a way that with XXX mind and will are ascribed to man, with XXXX a mind that knows God and a will that wills what God wills. This view is untenable because v. 27, which reports the execution of v. 26, is not XXXX but only XXX repeated. Because now the divine execution certainly corresponds to the divine resolution, so also XXX alone designates the whole of the divine image. The fact that XXXX is added to XXX in v. 26 has the purpose to emphasize the concept of the divine image. Thus Luther in the translation, v. 26: "an image that is like us"; [Baier II, 143](#): *imago simillima*. Likewise Gerhard, *locus De Imagine Dei*; differently Luther in a passage in the commentary on Genesis, *Op. Lat., Erl. II*, 87 ff.; [St. Louis I, 410 ff.](#) — 2. It is in the nature of things, namely, in the difference of the Creator and the creature, that God's image in man does not refer to all divine attributes, e.g., not to aseity and eternity, and that the divine attributes which find representation in man, e.g., wisdom, the position of ruler, etc., belong to man in a lesser degree. God is wise, and man is wise; God rules, and man rules. But to God belongs infinite wisdom, dominion, etc., limited to man, as has been stated in the doctrine of God. — 3. With regard to the correct understanding of Genesis 1:26-27, the following should be noted: For the assumption that man was created in the image of the human nature of Christ (according to Origen and Andr. Osiander) or in the image of the

2. The content of the divine image. [^]

The divine image in man does not only consist in the possession of intellect and will or in the fact that man is a person, but above all in the right condition of intellect and will, namely in the fact that man recognized God with his intellect and wanted with his will only what God wants. And if we still distinguish the faculty of desire (the sensual desire, *appetitus sensitivus*),

divine nature of Christ (according to newer theologians), the words Gen. 1:26-27 offer no support. nature of Christ (so the newer theologians), he words Gen. 1:26-27 do not offer any clue that the nature of Christ (according to newer theologians) was created. Rather, from the plural suffix "in our image," "according to our likeness," it is clear that man was created in the image of the triune God, that is, according to that which is common to the three persons, that is, according to the glorious divine nature. The dogmatists express it thus: Causa exemplaris imaginis divinae non una divinitatis persona, sed Deus triunus est. Moreover, the relation of the divine image to the human nature of Christ contradicts clear scriptural statements. According to 1 Cor. 15:45 ff. Christ is ὁ ἐσχάτος ἀνθρώπος according to his human nature, and Adam ὁ πρῶτος ἀνθρώπος. According to Heb. 2:14 Christ took on the flesh and blood of men; not conversely men took on Christ's flesh and blood. What Quenstedt I, 861 sq. says is a perfect refutation of all the thoughts of man that have been put on the market about the image of God in ancient and modern times. Quenstedt writes: Opinio Origemanorum et Osiandri statuentium: 'Adamum ad similitudinem formae naturae humanae Christi in mente divina praeconceptae esse creatum', refutatur: 1. ex Gen. 1:26, ubi Deus Pater, cum Filio et Spiritu Sancto loquens, non dicit: 'Faciamus hominem ad imaginem tuam', scilicet Filii incarnandi, sed nostram; 2. ex 1 Cor. 15:45, ubi Christus dicitur 'secundus Adam'; iam vero, si creationem Adami ordine praecessit idea vel forma humanae naturae Christi in mente divina praeconcepta, ad cuius similitudinem Adam creatus fuerit, Christus primus Adam potius dicendus erat quam secundus; ut taceam, nos non Christo hoc sensu, sed Christ nobis similem factum esse, excepto peccato, Ebr. 2:14. 3. [Google] Nullibi dicitur in Scriptura, hominem creatum esse κατὰ τὸν υἱόν, secundum Filium, sed κατὰ τὸν ὁ-εόν, secundum Deum indefinite sumptum. E contrario Filius Dei dicitur fuisse ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκός ἀμαρτίας, in similitudine carnis peccati, Rom. 8:3, et accepisse μορφήν δούλου, formam servi, Phil. 2:7. 4. Repugnat ordo decretorum divinum. Decretum enim de homine formando ad imaginem Dei antecessit decretum de mittendo Filio Dei in carnem ad reparandam hanc effigiem amissam, ac proinde Filius Dei incarnandus in posteriori non potest esse exemplar imaginis divinae homini concreandae in priori. 5. Obstat missio Filii ipsa, quae facta est non ob similitudinem, sed ob beatitudinem hominis, 1 Tim. 1:15. 6 Imago Dei in cognitione Dei, iustitia et sanctitate constituitur, ut Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24, non autem in corporis membris, in figura aut statura corporis. 7. Per lapsum imago Dei deperdita est, corporea autem membra deperdita non sunt. [Google]

e.g. of eating etc., from understanding and will, then we must say that also in this no God-opposing inclination was present. This is not only evident from Gen. 1:31 ("very good") and from Gen. 2:25 ("they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed"),¹⁵³⁵⁾ but this content of the divine image is clearly expressed in the report about the original state of man by two things: 1. by the fact that God gives commandments to man (Gen. 2:16-17: "You shall eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat"); 2. by the fact that man is portrayed as living in the most intimate intercourse and in undisturbed fellowship with God.¹⁵³⁶⁾ This presupposes knowledge of God and holiness of mind on the part of man. This content of the divine image is also taught in the New Testament, Col. 3:10 and Eph. 4:24. The new man is described Col. 3:10 thus: ὁ ἀνακαινούμενος εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαν-τος αὐτόν and Eph. 4:24: ὁ κατὰ θεόν κτισθέντα ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ὁσιότητι τῆς ἀληθείας.¹⁵³⁷⁾ As contrary to Scripture, therefore, are to be rejected all views which describe the original condition of man as animal-like, without speech, or yet as morally neither good nor evil ("morally indifferent"), or as already afflicted with a God-opposing tendency to pleasure ("sensuality"). According to Scripture, man was not created as an animal, but as a ruler over the animal world. Also man was not merely

1535) Cf. Luther's elaboration on the nakedness of man before and after the fall, [St. L. 1, 170](#); Erl. (lat.) 1, 175 sqq.

1536) Gen. 2:19 ff. 3:2-3.

1537) The old teachers find in these New Testament passages a direct statement about the original state of man. If Meyer et al. deny this, but at the same time admit that the apostle Paul "very naturally had in mind, by analogy with the creation of Adam, the image of God which this first-created man had," and that we have in the apostle's words "a parallel with the creation of Adam in the image of God," this is a contradiction in terms. The "parallel" with the creation of Adam in God's image would disappear if we did not have here a direct statement about the original state of man. The right thing has been hit upon by Philippi and others more recent. Cf. Philippi, Glaubenslehre 3 III, 372 ff. [Ellicott](#) on Eph. 4:24 (against Jul. Müller) also correctly says: "From this passage [Eph. 4:24], compared with that from Colossians, we may appropriately deduce the great dogmatic truth, — '*ut quod perdidimus in Adam, id est, secundum imaginem et similitudinem esse Dei, hoc in Christo Iesu recipimus*.'"

capable of education, but actually educated and gifted with language, positively intelligent, to the extent that he not only knew God, but also possessed a natural science such as is now unattainable by the most diligent study. Luther rightly says that only Adam before the fall deserved the name of philosopher.¹⁵³⁸⁾ But above all things man was not morally indifferent or created with a mere disposition to good,¹⁵³⁹⁾ but positively good (*sanctae Dei voluntati conformis, amore et fiducia Dei praeditus*), without any stirring sensuality or evil inclination, as we have seen from the biblical account. The contradiction against the scriptural doctrine of the created divine image or the *iustitia originalis concreata* is often based on a wrong concept of the moral good. One wants to accept as morally good only that which man produces himself by way of evolution (self-activity, self-decision, self-determination), not that which is created or given to man by God. When Luther calls the original state of man *status medius*, he does not describe man as morally in-different, but as not yet so fixed in the good that he could not fall.¹⁵⁴⁰⁾

 1538) *Opp. ex. Lat., Eri. I, 83: Si volumus praedicare insignem philosophum, praedicemus primos nostros parentes, cum adhuc essent a peccato puri. Suttjer bentt baran, quod Adam et Heva omnes omnium animalium affectus, sensus et vires intellexerunt.* [Google] [St. L. I, 80, 81.](#)

1539) Ritschl understands the divine image as a pre-dated ideal of life, i.e. not as what God has given to man in creation, but as what man makes of himself on the way of development. Cf. [Recht, u. Versöhnung 3 III, 314 ff.](#)

1540) Luther distinguishes ([St. L. I, 135 ff.](#)) between childly and manly innocence (*innocentia puerilis* and *virilis*). By filial innocence he understands a state in which man could still fall by the devil's deceit. Manly innocence is the state in which the angels fortified in goodness are now and the saved men will be in eternal life (*inamissibilis innocentia et immortalitas*). How little "indifferent" Luther thinks of the state of "childlike" innocence is evident from his description of it. Luther opposes the "antics" of the scholastics (*nugantur*), who described the original state as a mere disposition (*qualitas*) to goodness. Against this he says of original righteousness (*Opp. ex., Eri. I, 141 sq.; St. L. I, 138*): "If we want to follow Moses, we can say that the original righteousness can be called that, that the man was justified, true, sincere, not only bodily and outwardly, but especially inwardly in the heart, and that he knew God,

3. Image of God in the broader sense and in the proper sense. [△]

According to Col. 3:10 and Eph. 4:24, the divine image, which consists of the knowledge of God and holiness of the will, is only restored in the beginning in the rebirth through faith in Christ. Therefore, man lacks it after the fall. In this the Lutheran theologians agree. They differ, however, in the question whether in the passages Gen. 9:6 ("Whoever sheds the blood of man, his blood shall also be shed by man, for God made man in His image") and Jam. 3:9 ("Through the tongue ... we curse man, made in the image of God") a divine image is still ascribed to man after the fall. Some deny this, assuming that man is described in these passages according to what he was through creation and is to become again in Christ. Thus Luther,¹⁵⁴¹⁾ Philipps,¹⁵⁴²⁾ Gottfried Hoffman,¹⁵⁴³⁾ Others claim that man is described in these passages according to what he still is after the Fall, namely a creature endowed with intellect and will, in which a certain similarity with God is still contained. Thus Baier¹⁵⁴⁴⁾ Quenstedt¹⁵⁴⁵⁾ and others. The latter, however, distinguish between likeness in the broader sense, according to which man, in contrast to the animals, is still a rational being, which he has retained after the fall, and likeness in the actual sense, according to which man recognizes God and serves God, and which he has lost after the fall. In this there is no factual difference insofar as Luther *et al.* do not deny that man has intellect and will after the Fall, and Baier *et al.* do not deny that man has completely lost *sapientia* and *iustitia* originalis through the Fall. We prefer Luther's view. It has been objected to Luther's view that not a lost, but only a still existing image of God in man can be a reason why we should not shed the blood of men and not curse them. But Luther and those who

 was obedient to him with all his desire, understood the works of God without any other instruction, from himself. ... To this original righteousness belongs also that Adam loved God and God's work with all his heart and with the purest affections."

1541) On Gen. 9:6. [St. L. I, 600 f.](#) 1542) *Glaubenslehre* 3 II, 371 f.

1543) *Synopsis*, p. 291. 1544) [Comp. II, 146](#).

1545) *Syst. I*, 876. 901 ff.

share his view, think not only of the lost image of God, but also of the image of God to be restored in Christ. Luther says: "Which [image of God], though man has lost it through sin, as indicated above, stands therefore that it can be renewed again through the Word of God and the Holy Spirit." This view is recommended because it expresses a thought that runs through all of Scripture since Gen. 3:15. The fact that God still puts up with fallen mankind at all and allows it — and for its sake also the world — to exist, is to be understood according to Scripture from the point of view that God wants to renew fallen mankind in Christ to the image after which He originally created it (Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24). This point of view is also of practical importance. The truth, established in Scripture, that God gave His Son to the world and wants to renew it in Christ to the original image of God, is suitable to save us from misanthropy when we perceive the deceitfulness and wickedness of men, be it in the spiritual area (in the fight against the Gospel), be it in the worldly area (as in the World War). The thought to call fallen men, because they still have intellect and will at all, God's image, under deduction of what should become of them in Christ, is somewhat far away. Mind and will of fallen man are an "idle mechanism", insofar as fallen man does not realize his salvation with his mind, but moves entirely in spiritual darkness (1 Cor. 2:14: ον δύνασαι γνῶναι) and his will is not attached to God, but is an enmity against God (Rom. 8:7: ἐχθρὰ εἰς θεόν).

4. The relationship of the divine image to human nature. [^]

The divine image, that is, the right knowledge of God and the conformity of the human will with the will of God, was not added to the man in the creation afterwards and externally, as the papists teach, who understand the divine image as *donum superadditum*,¹⁵⁴⁶⁾ but was

1546) *Catech. Roman. I, 2, 18: Ex limo terrae hominem sic corpore affectum et constitutum effinxit, ut non quidem naturae ipsius vi, sed divino beneficio immortalis esset et impassibilis. Quod autem ad animam pertinet, eam ad imaginem et similitudinem suam formavit liberumque ei arbitrium tribuit; omnes praeterea motus animi atque appetitiones ita in eo tempera-*


created for man, as can be seen from Gen. 1:26:: Let us make man, בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ [HEBREW], so that the divine image is to be described as *donum concreatum*, *donum naturale*, *donum intrinsecum*. From this it follows for the state of man after the fall that now human nature is not intact (*natura integra* or *in puris naturalibus*), as the papists and newer theologians and philosophers teach, but deeply and in the innermost corrupted (*natura corrupta*, *natura sauciata*).¹⁵⁴⁷⁾ To be sure, the *iustitia originalis* does not constitute the essence of man, because man is ἀνθρώπος even after the fall (Rom. 5:12), and to that extent it is not to be called a substance, but an accidens.¹⁵⁴⁸⁾ But the *iustitia originalis* belongs to the constitution of the intact man, that is, of man as he ought to be, as God created him, and as he is to become again through Christ. After all, according to Scripture it is truly an anomaly that man, who is created for God and also still knows that

vit, ut rationis imperio nunquam non parerent. Tum originalis iustitiae admirabile donum addidit ac deinde caeteris animantibus praeesse voluit. [Google] Cf. also [Günther, Symb. 4, p. 137](#) [Engelder, [Pop. Symbolics, p. 166](#)]. Quenstedt on the papist conception of the divine image in its relationship to human nature I, 889.

1547) Luther on the relationship of the divine image to human nature, [St. L. I, 201 f.](#): "The scholastics argue that the righteousness in which Adam was created was not in Adam's nature, but was like an ornament or gift, so that man was first adorned; as when one puts a wreath on a beautiful virgin, which wreath is not a part of nature, but is something special and separate from nature, which comes from the outside and can be removed again without violating nature. Therefore they argue about man and devils, that even though they have lost the righteousness in which they were created, they have kept their natural powers pure, as they were created in the first place. But from such doctrines, because they belittle original sin, we should beware as from a poison. And we should rather believe that righteousness was not a gift that came from outside and was something different from the nature of man, but was truly natural, that is, that it was Adam's nature to love God, to believe God, to know God. For these things were as natural in Adam as it is natural for the eyes to see the light. But if the eye is wounded and corrupted, you may rightly say that the nature is wounded and corrupted... For as it is the nature of the eye to see, so it was natural in Adam's reason and will that he knew God, trusted God, and feared God."

1548) Luther, *Opp. ex., Eri. I, 211*: [Manet quidem natura, sed multis modis corrupta](#).

there is a God (Rom. 1:19 ff.), does not and cannot serve God (Rom. 8:7: τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐχ υποτάσσεται οὔδε γάρ δύναται), but lives as a practical atheist in the world, as Eph. 2:12 says of all heathen: ἐλπίδα μὴ ἔχοντες καὶ ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ. Of the worship of the heathen, 1 Cor. 10:20: "What the heathen sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God."

The actual seat of the divine image is not the body, but the soul of man, because the soul is the seat of the knowledge of God and of righteousness. But it is self-evident that the divine image also manifested itself in the body, because the body is the organ of the soul and an essential part of man. The Apology 80, 17f. [[Trigl. 109, 17](#) Aequale temperamentum qualitatum corporis, "a fine, perfect health and everywhere pure blood, uncorrupted powers of the body".

5. Direct consequences of the divine image in man. [^]

1. Immortality, because according to the doctrine of the Scriptures death and its harbingers (sickness, weakness) only came into man through sin, Gen. 2:17: "Whichever day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die of death"; Rom. 5:12: "death through sin"; Rom. 6:23: "death is the wages of sin". It is a pagan opinion that the death of man has its reason in the matter of the body. Likewise, of course, also more recent theologians.¹⁵⁴⁹⁾ — 2. The dominion over the creatures. This is presented in Gen. 1:26-28 as a consequence directly connected with the divine image. With respect to the nature of the dominion before the fall, it is to be said that it was a real dominion, according to which the animals put themselves at the service of man without constraint. After the Fall, man has only a caricature of the original dominion, because he has to use taming, cunning and power if he wants to remain to some extent master of the animals. With the sinlessness of man, the dominion over the creatures described in Genesis 1:28 was lost. Luther calls what is left of man's dominion a "pseudo dominion" (*speciem dominii unbnudum titulum dominii*). Man still succeeds in a partial subordination of the creature through cunning and coercion. But thereby the creature remains in rebellion against the sinful man. The

¹⁵⁴⁹⁾ Further details in Vol. III, p. 569 ff.

animals torture, harm, kill and eat their original lord, in the air he breaks his neck, the water drowns him, the earth buries him, etc. Luther considers this contemplation useful. We realize what an abomination before God sin must be, because it has so thoroughly broken the relationship between man and the rest of the creature.¹⁵⁵⁰

6. The ultimate purpose of the divine image. ^

We are not dependent on counsel here either. The final purpose of the divine image is certainly evident from its content. God created the man after his own, the divine. God created man in his own, the divine image, because he wanted to have a creature among the creatures a. that would recognize him, live according to his will and enjoy bliss in his fellowship, b. that would be his representative ruler on earth. After this original purpose has fallen away through the sin of man, God takes it up again in Christ in such a way that he cancels the sin of man for the sake of Christ's substitutionary

 1550) Luther, *Opp. ex., Eri. I, 82 sqq.: Fiunt Adam et Heva rectores terrae, maris et aeris. Committitur autem eis hoc dominium non solum consilio, sed etiam expresso mandato. ... Ergo nudus homo sine armis et muris, imo etiam sine vestitu omni in sola sua nuda carne dominatus est omnibus volucribus, feris et piscibus. Quis potest cogitare istam quasi portionem divinae naturae, quod Adam et Heva omnes omnium animalium affectus, sensus et vires omnes intellexerunt? Quale enim regnum fuisset, nisi hoc scivissent? ... Si igitur volumus praedicare insignem philosophum, praedicemus primos nostros parentes, cum adhuc essent a peccato puri. ... Etiam stellarum et totius astronomiae rationem certissimam habuerunt. Quae autem efficitur in vita, ea non fiunt per dominium, quod Adam habuit, sed per industriam et artem. Sicut videmus, dolo et fraude capi aves et pisces; sic arte cicurantur bestiae. Nam quae maxime domestica sunt, ut anseres, gallinae, tamen per se et sua natura fera sunt. [Google] Ergo leprosum hoc corpus habet adhuc Dei beneficio speciem aliquam dominii in alias creaturas. Sed id perexiguum est et longe inferius illo primo dominio, ubi non arte, non dolis opus fuit, sed simpliciter divinae voci paruit creatura, cum iuberentur Adam et Heva dominari eis. Ergo nomen et vocabulum dominii retinemus ceu nudum titulum; ipsa autem res fere tota amissa est. Et tamen bonum est ista scire et cogitare, ut suspiremus illum venturum diem, in quo haec nobis restituerunt, quae in paradiso per peccatum amisimus. Expectamus enim eam vitam, quam expectasset quoque Adam. Atque hoc recte miramur, et Deo ob id gratias agimus, quod nos peccato sic deformati, sic hebetes, stupidi et mortui quasi, per beneficium Christi expectamus eandem gloriam vitae spiritualis, quam Adam expectaturus erat, si mansisset in sua animali vita, quae imaginem Dei habebat. [Google]*

satisfaction and restores the knowledge of God and the holiness of the will in those who believe in Christ, Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24. The knowledge of God after the Fall thus gains a new object, because it has *primo loco* the God as object, who forgives sin for the sake of Christ and through faith in Him without the works of the law (Luke 1:77: γνώσις σωτηρίας ... εν ἀφέσει αμαρτιών. Whether at what point and how God, if man had not fallen, would have allowed a change to occur later in the *status* of man before the fall (in the "paradisiacal state") is only a matter of conjecture. Certainly, the concept of salvation, σωτηρία, *salus*, does not apply to man before the fall, because the σωτηρία acquired through Christ has the Fall as a prerequisite. Luke 19:10: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save (σώσαι) that which was lost."

7. Woman and the divine image. [^]

The Gnostic sect of the Encratites in the second century, later called Severians, denied the divine image of woman in connection with their false asceticism.¹⁵⁵¹⁾ But that also the woman was created in God's image is explicitly stated in Gen. 1:26: God created man in His image, בְּצִלְמֵנוּ [HEBREW], namely, as v. 27 is expressly added, man and woman (זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה [HEBREW]). The same is also evident from New Testament passages. That the regeneration into the divine image described in Col. 3:10 and Eph. 4:24, which happens in Jesus Christ, is also granted to the woman, is certain, because there is no difference between man and woman concerning the participation in the goods of Christ, Gal. 3:28: "Here is neither Jew nor Greek, here is neither bond nor free, here is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Jesus Christ." Also, the same dominion over the creatures came to the woman, as is evident from the plural מְלָכִים [HEBREW] (reigns), Gen. 1:28. That Eve had a lesser knowledge of nature, as Baier thinks,¹⁵⁵²⁾ cannot be proven from Scripture.

On the other hand, it is clear from Scripture that even before the Fall, woman was in a relationship of subordination to man

1551) So reports Eusebius, *Kirchengesch.* 4, 29.

1552) *Comp. II, 158: Ratione scientiae rerum naturalium Eva Adamo cessisse videtur.*

This relationship to the man is denoted in Gen. 2:18 by the עֲזָרָה אִשָּׁרָה [HEBREW] (his helper). The same is expressed in the New Testament, 1 Cor. 11:9: "Man was not created for the sake of woman (διὰ τὴν γυναῖκα), but woman for the sake of man (διὰ τὸν ἄνδρα). From this it follows that the woman is forbidden to occupy a position of dominion over the man, 1 Tim. 2:12: γυναῖκι οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω ἀνθεντεῖν ἄνδρός. This prohibition is established in a twofold way: a. by the fact that Adam was created first, then Eve, v. 13: Ἀδάμ πρῶτος ἐπλάσθη, εἶτα Εὐά; b. By the fact that the woman has introduced a very harmful innovation, namely, sin, v. 14: Ἀδάμ οὐκ ἠπατήθη, ἡ δε γυνὴ ἀπατηθεῖσα ἐν παραβάσει γέγονεν. The Scripture, then, teaches quite clearly that subordination is due to the woman in relation to the man, both according to the Creator's order and in consideration of the order which applies in the world through the Fall and after the Fall.

Especially in our time, the position of women within human society has largely been forgotten. The reason for this is twofold. The first is that with all the spread of the Bible, it has less influence on human society than ever before. The other reason is that with all the progress in technology, natural common sense among men is going downhill very fast. In Luther there is a double set of statements about the position of woman within human society. On the one hand, he says:¹⁵⁵³) "The female generation is not ordered by God to governance, either in the church or otherwise in secular offices." Further:¹⁵⁵⁴) "The Holy Spirit has excluded women from governance in the church." On the other hand, Luther inculcates,¹⁵⁵⁵) that the female generation is due special reverence (*reverentia*) from the manly generation because woman is the mother and nurturer of the human race. *Mulier ut est creatura Dei, cum reverentia spectanda est; ad hoc enim est creata, ut circa virum sit, ut filios nutriet et educet honeste et pie.* [Google] Luther states throughout: Just as God created man and woman with sexual diversity, he also designed different spheres of activity for both.

1553) [St. L. II, 687](#). 1554) [XVI, 2280](#).

1555) [V, 1516](#); *Opp. ex., Erl.* XXI, 170.

He says about this:¹⁵⁵⁶⁾ each one is created, so he also works most suitable. A woman grasps a child with the smallest finger much better than a man with both fists'. Therefore let each one remain in the work to which he is called and ordained by God." This is a scriptural position. The Scriptures definitely transfer the sphere of activity of the woman to the home, by distinguishing very sharply between the forbidden public activity and the permitted and commanded domestic activity of the woman. As to public speaking and teaching, 1 Cor. 14:35 says: "It is evil for women (αισχρόν ἐστιν) to speak among the congregation." [Luther Bible] Nor should they present questions for instruction to their own husbands in the public assemblies, but at home (ἐν οἴκῳ). To public teaching, according to the context, also goes the prohibition 1 Tim. 2:12: "A woman I do not permit (οὐκ επιτρέπω) to teach." On the other hand, Scripture assigns to women a rule and teaching role in the home, 1 Tim. 5:14: "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house" (οἰκοδεσποτεῖν, be mistresses of the house). The older women are to be good teachers according to Tit. 2:3 (καλοδιδάσκαλοι), that they teach the young women to love their husbands, to love children (φιλότεκνοι) ..., be domestic (οἰκονομί, guarding the house; other reading: οἰκονογοί, doing housework). Probably no teacher of the church has so often and so eloquently praised the glory of woman in her position as housewife and housemother as Luther. He says against Rome's elevation of the status of monks and nuns:¹⁵⁵⁷⁾ "What can be taught in the congregation of God that is better and more useful than the example of a godly housemother, who prays, sighs, cries out, thanks God, rules the house, does what the office of a pious woman entails, desires that she may have children, with great chastity, gratitude and godliness?" The women who push themselves out of this sphere into public life are naturally those who do not love children, but wish to prevent the blessing of children. What is a woman's highest honor, they consider a disgrace. Many others, because it is fashionable, run along in thoughtlessness. The "statesmen" (and of course also the pastors) who have praised and pursued women's suffrage as a progress of mankind

1556) [St. L. V, 1517](#). 1557) [II, 540](#).

have thus proved that in this respect, as has already been reminded, common sense has come to an end with them even before the end of the world. As is well known, the biblical view, according to which the woman has her sphere of activity in the house, is called "oriental". It has been seriously claimed that the apostle Paul, writing to American congregations, would not have said: "It is not fitting for women to speak among the congregation", and: "A woman should learn in silence with all submissiveness. A woman I do not permit to teach," but, considering the various relationships, he would have expressed himself thus or similarly: "Women to the front"; "Get on the platform"; οὐκ αἰσχρόν γάρ ἐστιν γυναικὶν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ λαλεῖν. But there is a great deception here. That we have to do with 1 Cor. 14 and 1 Tim. 2, not with a temporary "Oriental," but with a universal order, is evident from the reason which the apostle immediately adds. He justifies his veto against the public address and teaching of the woman a. by the Creator's order, namely, that Adam was made first, then Eve; b. by the part played by the woman in the Fall, namely, that "Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and introduced the transgression." These facts remain the same in the Orient and in the Occident and at all times, and so also the order based on these facts. Then one more point should be pointed out here: To drag the woman from the place of honor in the home into public activity should be prevented by the generally recognized fact that the woman is the most influential teacher of the human generation. If the women in the house are "good teachers" (καλοδιδάσκαλοι, Tit. 2:3), they have greater influence on the growing generation than the men together with the pastors and school teachers. And how, in general, has the reverence for the female generation diminished since it entered public life as a competitor of man! When the author of this dogmatic was still a student, every representative of the manly generation immediately offered his seat in the tramcar to every representative of the female generation, whether poor or rich. Already for about two decades this happens only exceptionally. The world with its cleverness proves to be foolish and blind also in this case.

B . Man after the Fall. [^]*(De statu peccati.)*

In recent times, according to the Gnostic ophites¹⁵⁵⁸) ("Brothers of the Serpent"), sin has been understood as an exaltation of the human race. This is exactly the conception of sin by which the devil seduced the first men to sin, Gen. 3:5: "You will by no means die of death, but ... be like God." Schiller sees in the fall of man "the happiest and greatest event in the history of man"¹⁵⁵⁹) Hegel has expressed himself to this effect: "The state of innocence, this paradisiacal state, is the animal one. Paradise is a park where only animals and not men can stay. ... The fall of man is therefore the eternal myth, by which he becomes man." ¹⁵⁶⁰) Even in our own country there is no lack of similar conceptions of the Fall and sin. Strong¹⁵⁶¹) provides ample quotations for this from the writings of Emerson, Hawthorne, Schurman, etc. From the humanistic and pantheistic point of view, sin is conceived as the necessary passage point or background for virtue. Sin, even as expressed in Thomas Paine, belongs, taken as a whole, to the perfection of the world.¹⁵⁶²) This results, as Strong notes, in this overall view: "The Fall was a fall *up* and not *down*." This, as has already been reminded, is precisely the Satanic representation of sin, Gen. 3:5.

1558) on the [Ophites](#) RE. ² V, 240 ff.

1559) In [Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 322](#) f., from Schiller's "Etwas über die erste Menschengesellschaft, Übergang des Menschen zur Freiheit und Humanität". Secular Edition of the Works, Cotta, 13, 26 f.

1560) In [Luthardt, comp. 10, p. 165](#), from Hegel's "Philosophy of History," p. 233. [Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 322](#): "Hegel sees in sin the necessary point of passage through which the finite spirit rises from the bondage of nature to freedom."

1561) [Augustus H. Strong, Systematic Theology, p. 563](#) ff.

1562) op. cit., p. 564: "His [Emerson's] view of Jesus is found in his *Essays*, 2, 263: 'Jesus would. absorb the race; but Tom Paine, or the coarsest blasphemer, *helps humanity* by resisting this exuberance of power.'" "In his *Divinity School Address* he [Emerson] banished the person of Jesus from genuine religion. He thought 'one could not be a man if he must subordinate his nature to Christ's nature.'" p. 565: "Hawthorne hints, though rather hesitatingly, that without sin the higher humanity of man could not be taken up at all, and that sin may be essential to the first conscious awakening of moral freedom and the possibility of progress."

According to the Scriptures, sin is not exaltation and happiness, but the deepest degradation and the only misfortune of men, because other evils are merely consequences of sin. And with this the human experience is true. All humanistic-pantheistic talk of sin as the necessary point of passage for "moral freedom" and for the development of "true humanity" fails because of the fact of human conscience. The human conscience has rightly been called the insurmountable enemy of pantheism and every other form of atheism. Man does not succeed in understanding sin as a necessary point of passage for "true humanity" or as "progress" and "the happiest event in human history. Man has a bad conscience before God because of his sin, and he feels just as "happy" because of his sin as Adam and Eve did when they hid under the trees in the garden before the face of God the Lord after the Fall, Gen. 3:8. But for us men, there is an extremely great and happy "event in human history" after the Fall through the grace of God. This is the incarnation of the Son of God. The purpose of this is, after all, to richly restore to us men, through his — the Son of God's — vicarious satisfaction, what we lost through the devil's deceit in the case of our first parents. To the personal appropriation of the divine restitution belongs, however, that we do not let the devil deceive us again about the fall of man and sin, but that we let the Word of God open our eyes rightly. Therefore, in a presentation of the Christian doctrines also the *locus de peccato* belongs. This doctrine can still be treated favorably, even in the face of modern opposition, in the three sections, a. *de peccato in genere*, b. *de peccato originali*, c. *de peccatis actualibus*.

a. Sin in general. [^]_—

1. The concept of sin. [^]_—

According to the Scriptures, sin is the non-conformity of man with the norm of the divine law (νόμος) given to man, whether this non-conformity consists in a state (*status, habitus*) or in individual internal or external actions (*actiones internae et externae*). This definition of sin is that of Scripture, 1 John 3:4:


ἡ ἀμαρτία ἰοῦν ἢ ἀνομία. Ἀνομία, etymologically, is a negative term and at first expresses only the lack of conformity to the divine νόμος (*carentia conformitatis cum lege*). According to the language of Scripture, however, ἀνομία is at the same time a positive term and denotes unlawfulness, a violation of the law, or a breach of the law. This is evident from the ways of speaking in Scripture: τὴν ἀνομίαν ποιεῖν (1 John 3:4), οἱ ἐργαζόμενοι τὴν ἀνομίαν (Matt. 7:23). That the lack of conformity to the divine law is something positively evil is also evident from the following facts attested in Scripture: 1. Man, as a moral being endowed with intellect and will, is obliged to conform to the divine will every moment of his human existence, as is expressed without any restrictions on the question as to which is the noblest commandment in the law Matt. 22:37-40: "You shall love God, your Lord, with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. ... Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." If this agreement with the divine law is not there, then *eo ipso* lawlessness or godlessness is there. Rightly has been recalled an analogue in human relationships. A servant who fails to fulfill his duties would claim, against all law and against his own conscience, that he has done nothing evil, but has only taken a neutral position with respect to his obligations. — It is psychologically impossible that man, whose nature includes reason and will, could be neutral even for a moment. If man's thoughts and will do not cling to God, he clings to creatures, and this is apostasy from God, as Christ expressly testifies Matt. 6:24: "No man can serve two masters."


The concept of sin does not include that it is done with consciousness and deliberation against God's will. According to the Scriptures, the evil condition that is innate in man and that he cannot change is sin, as is clear from the words Eph. 2:3: "children of wrath by nature". Yes, the Scripture further testifies that the evil state, which man, after becoming a Christian, does not want, does not lose the character of sin, as can be seen from the words of the apostle Rom. 7:19, 24: "The evil I do not want, I do."

"I wretched man, who will redeem me from the body of this death!" The Lutheran Church remains with the doctrines of Scripture even on this point in the face of the widespread error. The Apology¹⁵⁶³) calls it a pagan error that consciousness or deliberation belongs to the essence of sin: *Transtulerunt* [the Romans] *huc ex philosophia prorsus alienas sententias, quod propter passiones* [the innate evil inclinations] *nec boni nec mali simus, nec laudemur nec vituperemur. Item nihil esse peccatum nisi voluntarium.* [[Google](#)] With the papists agree newer theologians like Hofmann: "As long as the ego is still a becoming, one will not be able to say as afterwards that it is the subject of sin, but this it becomes in the measure in which it becomes itself, in which it consciously begins to determine itself or rather to let itself be determined by the innate sin."¹⁵⁶⁴)

2. Law and sin. [^]

Since sin is ἀνομία ["lawlessness"], in the doctrine of sin it must be clearly seen what is the νόμος ["law"] by whose transgression ἀνομία comes about. The definition that the Formula of Concord¹⁵⁶⁵) gives of the law proves to be scriptural in all parts:

 1563) Müller 84, 42, 43. [[Trigl. 117, 43](#) [^]]
 1564) [Schriftbeweis 2 I, 562. L. u. W. 24, 248](#) [*sic* — [p. 228](#): not 248].
 Later Lutheran theologians also hold with the Lutheran confession that *tó voluittarium* does not belong to the essence of sin. [Baier II, 275](#): *Philosophis quidem peccatorum appellatione nihil venit, nisi in quo aliqua ratio voluntarii apparet, ut, quae contra legem fiunt, in tantum dicantur peccata, in quantum de voluntario participant. In Scripturis autem peccatum in significatione multo latiore accipitur, prout Iobannes 1. Epist. 3:4 satis habet, per ἀνομίαν definire peccatum, non expressa ratione τὸν voluntarii.* [[Google](#)] [Quenstedt 1, 967](#): *Antithesis: 1. Pontificiorum quorundam, ut Andradii, lib. 3, Defens. Cone. Trid., qui negat, quamvis ἀνομίαν peccatum esse. ... 2. Pelagianorum, ... contententium, peccatum originale non esse peccatum, quia in infantibus est involuntarium. 3. pontificiorum, statuentium, τὸ voluntarium esse de ratione peccati, adeo ut non sit peccatum, quod nullo modo est voluntarium. Ita Bellarminus. ... 4. Socinianorum, ut Socini, Ostorodi, Smalzii, qui peccatum originale propter eandem rationem (scilicet quia non est voluntarium) plane negant. ... 5. Arminianorum, in Actis Synodical. Def., art. 4, et in Apol. Conf., cap. 7, voluntarium ad rationem peccati requirentium. ... 6. Zwinglii et Calvini, in cap. 3. genes, peccatum originale pari ratione negantium, quod involuntarium sit.* [[Google](#)]

1565) Müller 636, 17 [[Trigl. 957, 17](#) [^]].

"We believe, teach and confess unanimously that the law is actually a divine doctrine, in which the righteous, unchangeable will of God is revealed, how man should be constituted in his nature, thoughts, words and works, so that he may be pleasing and acceptable to God. Very correctly, it is first pointed out here that only God's will to man constitutes laws for man. This belongs to human dignity. Every man is subject to God's law, but also only to God's law. Commandments given by men are only a binding norm if God has made these commandments His commandments, as is the case with the commandments of the worldly authorities (Rom. 13:1 ff.: "Let every man be subject to the authority that has power over him") and of the parents (Col. 3:20: "You children, be obedient to your parents in all things"), as long as they do not contradict God's commandments (Acts 6:27 ff.: "You must obey God more than men"). The so-called commandments of the church are not a conscience-binding norm, because Christ did not confer legislative power (*potestas legislatoria*) on His church, but expressly forbade it, Matt. 23:8: "One is your Master, Christ; but you are all brethren." What Christ has not commanded is not ordered in the Church by territories, but by Christians themselves by way of mutual agreement. Even through the abuse of freedom, the Church must not be tempted to command things that God has not commanded. In short, it must be maintained under all circumstances that only God's law is the norm by whose transgression sin comes about. "The pope," says Luther,¹⁵⁶⁶ "has filled the world with satanic obedience. For the pope has not commanded what God has commanded, but what he himself has devised; hence it has come about that his whole religion has not been righteous, but made and chosen by himself, and, in sum, has been a blatant hypocrisy." — On the other hand, God's law must be brought to bear not merely in part, but in its entire content. God demands in His law the purity of human nature (which is why Eph. 2:3 says in relation to the innate corrupt state of nature: "children of wrath by nature") and therefore also the purity of all inner and outer acts that belong to a righteous, pure nature, thus the

1566) [St. L. 1, 765](#).

purity of thought (Matt. 6:22: "Whoever is angry with his brethren is guilty of judgment"; v. 28: "Whoever lusts after a woman has already committed adultery with her in his heart"), of words (Matt. 12:36: "I tell you that men will have to give an account on the Last Day for every useless word they speak"), of deeds (Eph. 6:5: "I tell you that men will have to give an account on the last day for every useless word they speak"). 12:36: "I tell you that men will have to give an account on the last day of every useless word they have spoken"), of works (Eph. 6:5: "Know this, that no fornicator or unclean person or covetous person who is an idolater has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God"). Against this scope of the divine law, as extending to all inward and outward human acts, public and even more secret opposition has arisen at all times (Ps. 10:11: "God has forgotten; he has hidden his face; he will never see it"). In particular, a general protest arose and still arises against the fact that even the corrupt state of nature, which is innate in man, is truly sin and bears the "character of guilt"; rather, the expression "guiltless sin" should be appropriate here. More about this under the section *De Peccato Originali*. But whatever we men dismiss from God's law, that nevertheless stands as a divine requirement, and also all attempts to separate guilt from our non-conformity with the divine law are completely unsuccessful, as is also testified — to which we must always be reminded — by the fact of evil conscience. That the Formula of Concord correctly defines the divine law, when it says that it is the justified, unchangeable will of God "how man should be constituted in his nature, thoughts, words, and works, that he may be pleasing and acceptable to God," is also glaringly evident from the fact that the, who in our — man's — place came under the duty and penalty of the divine law, and thus made us "pleasing and acceptable to God," had to be a quite unique, wonderful person, namely, δαίος, ακακος, αμίαντος, κεχωρισμένος από των αμαρτωλών ["“holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners” “](Heb. 7:26), μη γνοῦς ἀμαρτίαν [one “who knew no sin”] (2 Cor. 5:21).


3. The knowledge of the divine law which binds all men. [^]


No thought of the gospel of God has ever entered the natural man's heart, 1 Cor. 2:9. But it stands differently with regard to the Law of God. Even after the Fall of man, his conscience (συνείδησις, *conscientia*) testifies to the will of God. The conscience operates in two ways. It

has a. a revealing and demanding function, Rom. 2:15a: the heathen who do not have the written Law, *ενδείκνται τό εργον τον νόμον γραπτόν έν ταῖς καρδίαις αντών, συμμαρτυρονσης αντών τής συνειδήσεως* ["show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness"]. b. a judging and condemning function, v. 15b: *καί μεταξύ άλλήλων των λογισμών κατηγορούν των ή και άπολογονμένων* ["Their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another"].¹⁵⁶⁷⁾ But the conscience no longer testifies with complete certainty to the will of God after the fall. There is an erring conscience (*conscientia erronea*); that is, fallen man considers permissible, even commanded, what God has forbidden (e.g., idolatry, Gal. 4:8: "You served those who are not gods by nature"; submission to the Antichrist, 2 Thess. 2:12: "that they should believe a lie "; murder of Christians, Jn. 16:2: "Whoever kills you will think he is doing God a service by doing so"), and he considers forbidden what God has allowed, e.g. the consumption of certain foods, Rom. 14:1 ff. Therefore, after the Fall, the immutable will of God is now known with complete certainty only from God's revelation in the Word, namely from the Holy Scriptures. Even though the actual head of the Holy Scriptures is the gospel (Jn. 5:39; Acts 10:43; 1 Cor. 2:2), it also contains a complete revelation of the immutable will of God, Matt. 5:18-19: "Until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter nor one tittle of the law will pass away. Whosoever therefore shall destroy one of these least commandments," etc. From the Holy Scriptures it is also known with certainty which Laws had only temporary and local validity, e.g. only for the Jews under the Law covenant, and therefore are not to be taught as divine norms for all men at all times. A great and harmful confusion of consciences is caused until our time by generalizing temporary and local Laws. Examples: Ex. 31:14-15: "Keep my Sabbath. ... Whoever does work on it shall be cut off from his people." [Luther's Bible] Deut. 26:27: " Ye shall not eat anything with the blood." Lev. 11 and Deut. 14: List of the unclean and the clean beasts. In contrast, the New Testament Col. 2:16-17: "Let no man therefore make you conscience of meat, or of drink, or of certain feasts, or of new moons, or of sabbaths." Result: The will of God to all men is only

¹⁵⁶⁷⁾ [L. u. W. 22, 231](#) ff. [C. A. Frank] Cf. on conscience the quotations in [Baier-Walther II, 269](#).

that which is taught in the Holy Scriptures as binding all men. These are also not the Ten Commandments in the version as they were given to the Jews (Ex. 20), but the Ten Commandments according to the explanation of the New Testament, as we have them e.g. in Luther's catechism.¹⁵⁶⁸⁾ It should also be noted that divine commandments given to individuals (*mandata specialia*) are not to be referred to others or even to all men, e.g. the sacrifice of Isaac, Gen. 22. In general, with regard to the lives and actions of the saints, what the Apology reminds us:¹⁵⁶⁹⁾ *Ceterum exempla iuxta regulam, hoc est, iuxta scripturas certas et claras, non contra regulam seu contra Scripturas interpretari convenit.* ["Besides, examples ought to be interpreted according to the rule, i.e., according to certain and clear passages of Scripture, not contrary to the rule, that is, contrary to the Scriptures."]¹⁵⁷⁰⁾

1568) Cf. Luther's exposition, [St. L. XX, 146 ff.](#) 1569) M. 284, 60 [[Trigl. 441, 60](#) 

1570) Individual questions. Do the prohibitions of marriage given in Deut. 18 apply only to Israel under the Law Covenant, or do they have general binding force? That this question must be answered in the affirmative has been explained in detail: Walther, *Pastorale*, p. 204 ff. [[Pastoral Theology](#), p. 240 ff.]; Proceedings of the Seventh Assembly of the [Synodical Conference, 1878](#), p. 5 ff; [Lehre und Wehre 19, 295 ff.](#); [22, 105 ff.](#) — 2. Is Sunday in place of the Jewish Sabbath commanded by God or only church ordinance? Cf. the detailed exposition: "The Lutheran Church's Doctrine of Sunday," [L. u. W. 10, 321 ff.](#); [11, 4 ff. 33 ff. 65 ff.](#) [Augustana, Art. 28, M. 67, 57](#) [[Trigl. 91, #57](#) Baier-Walther III, 351 ff. — 3. On usury, cf. the quotations in [Baier-Walther III, 358-366](#). Further: [Theses on Usury. With appended explanations from Luther's and other theologians'](#) writings. St. L. 1876 (reprinted from [L. u. W. 1866, pp. 325 ff.](#)). Report of the General Synod of 1869. Chemnitz deals with usury in great detail in his *Loci*, ed. Wittenberg 1623, II, 169 sqq, c. VI: *De Usura*. This very calm and luminous exposition, corresponding to Chemnitz's manner, is communicated in German translation [L. u. W. 10, 171 ff.](#) under the heading: "Martin Chemnitz über den Wucher." In-depth proceedings have also been held in the Lutheran Church in America on the "usury question." The understanding was complicated to some extent by the complicated terminology, some of which was used in different senses. One can read about this e.g. [RE.² XVII, 341 ff.](#) under the title: "Usury, church laws about it." About the course of the proceedings within the Lutheran Church of America we have formed the following. Judgment: That lending to the poor or to those in need should be done without "interest" or "interests" was admitted on all sides. A difference emerged on the question of how to deal with lending to non-poor people for the purpose of doing business. Underlying this difference is the different answer to only

4. The cause of sin. [^]

In fallen man, there is a strong tendency to blame God and creatures for sin, and thus to shift all or part

one question. This is the question that, according to Luther's process, can be formulated like this: Did the "hundred" naturally "grow five" or not? Those who answer with Luther to this question with No, judge accordingly that the *a priori* determination of certain "interests" is to be rejected; one must wait whether and how much "luck" (Luther's expression) the hundred have had during the year. Those who answer the above question in the affirmative, that is, who hold that the hundred naturally accrued five, consider it right that five percent or some certain sum be demanded *a priori*. Those who take this position within the Lutheran Church in America, however, mostly declare at the same time that it is required of love not to accept the stipulated "interest" if the hundred did not actually bring the "five". So they give away their fundamental theorem of the natural accrual of the fives and place themselves *in praxi* on Luther's fundamental theorem that the hundred does not naturally accrue fives. Why this side did not agree with Luther's theorem from the beginning has remained a logical and psychological mystery to us until this day. That Luther's sentence is correct, of it everyone can convince himself tangibly by the fact that he leaves hundred from a year and looks after course of a year whether fives were added to him. It is also important to note that we do not need the light of the Holy Scriptures at all to correctly judge the question of usury in the sense stated, but only an average use of natural reason, which has remained with us men even after the Fall, thank God. — 4. Also about the so-called "life insurance" much was and is negotiated. The fact that some Christians also find it somewhat difficult to get their bearings with regard to this question is, according to our observation, mainly due to the fact that they parallel life insurance and fire insurance. But these are two things which, on closer inspection, do not belong in the same class, but are so different that they cannot be compared at all. Fire insurance is based on the joint payment of a loss actually suffered, which is estimated and expressly determined according to its monetary value. To our knowledge, there is no fire insurance company that would insure a building whose real value is, for example, only one hundred dollars, for ten thousand dollars. So-called life insurance, on the other hand, does not ask at all about the financial value of the "insured" object. A person who may be completely worthless financially, or even a minus financial value for the family and for human society at large, can be "insured" for 2000 or 5000 or 10,000 dollars or even higher, depending on the amount of insurance the society accepts. The transaction therefore takes the form of a bet on the presumed life of the insured. A detailed exposition of the nature of life insurance, namely that it cannot well be conceived as an indemnity contract, is found in "Sentences

of the blame for sin away from oneself. Thus already Adam and Eve after the fall, Gen. 3:12: "The woman whom you gave me gave me of the tree, and I ate"; v. 13: "So the serpent deceived me that I ate." This manner is typical of the whole fallen human race. In doctrine and practice, questions such as these are continually raised, "Why did God create man with the possibility of falling?" and, "Why does God even now allow men to be tempted, since, according to his all-governing providence, he could very easily keep all temptation away from them?" These and similar questions have a tendency to confuse the issue of *causa peccati*.

According to the Scriptures, the cause of sin in man is a. the devil, who first sinned, then seduced man, and

 on Life Insurance", [L. u. W. 54, 241](#) ff. (author: Dr. F. Bente). In the last [thesis \(37\)](#) it is also pointed out that and why it is sometimes difficult even for Christians to recognize the reprehensible nature of life insurance, and that therefore life insurance is not in itself, unless other serious sins are added, to be made the object of actual church discipline. It is rightly added, however, that proper instruction should not be omitted in regard to the customary life insurance. — What is to be thought of the public teaching and addresses of women? As is well known, in some sectarian circles this question has long since been transcended. Scripture passages such as 1 Cor. 14:34-35 and 1 Tim. 2:11-15 are rejected as the norm for our time because they are supposedly based on "oriental [Eastern] views". Luther's position has also been questioned. But Luther is not an authority that determines our conscience, even though Luther, as we have already seen, says on the one hand that "*reverence*" (*reverentis*) is due to woman as the mother of the human race, and on the other hand very decidedly emphasizes that woman is not ordained to the public office of doctrine and government. What the Scriptures doctrine, where it concerns a Christian norm of life, is here again briefly summarized. Women are to be *καλοδιδάσκαλοι* ["teachers of what is good"] (Tit. 2:3) of children and before women. They are especially skilled at this because they "love children" (φιλότεκνοι, Tit. 2:4). But public addresses and teaching is forbidden them,, not according to Eastern, but according to God's view, because God says through His inspired apostle 1 Tim. 2:12: "A woman I do not permit to teach." God also gives two reasons for this: 1. Adam was made first, then Eve. 2. The woman brought a harmful innovation, sin, into the world. The popular calling to Gal. 3:28 ("Here is neither male nor female") is a blatant misuse of the passage, since it deals with the equal share in the grace and salvation acquired by Christ, but does not remove the difference of social standing. The same apostle who wrote Gal. 3:28, says 1 Tim. 2:13: "I do not allow a woman to teach," and 1 Cor. 14:35: αἰσχρόν γάρ ἐστιν γυναιεῖν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ. λαλεῖν.

even now is the driving force with unbelievers and the tempter to evil with believers. Jn. 8:44 it is said of the unbelieving Jews that they are ἐκ πατρός τον διαβόλου, and 2 Cor. 11:3 in reference to those who are already delivered from the authorities of darkness (Col. 1:13): "I fear lest, as the serpent beguiled Eve with his roguishness (ἐν τῇ πανουργίᾳ αὐτον), so also your senses be beguiled of the simplicity that is in Christ." Because of the seduction of men to sin, the devil is called in John 8:44 the slayer of men from the beginning, ἀνθρωποκτόνος ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, and because the devil is *prima causa peccati*, the inventor of sin, we rightly speak of sin as the devil's work, and that also in the sins of men who are already faithful. The latter fact is clearly expressed when Christ addressed no less a person than Peter, when the latter wanted to keep Him from suffering and dying, Matt. 16:23 with the words, "Get thee behind me, Satan," ὕπαγε δπίω μόν σατανά.¹⁵⁷¹⁾ — The cause of sin in man is b. the sinning man himself, because being tempted to sin does not cancel out the perpetration and responsibility of the sinning man. This is clear doctrine of the Scriptures. Although Eve and Adam were seduced by the devil, they are guilty and will be punished by God, Gen. 3:16-18. According to 2 Thess. 2:9 ff. those who are seduced by the devil and the anti-Christian by all kinds of lying powers and signs and wonders remain responsible to God and will be judged by God. Matt. 18:7: "Woe to the world for the offences" it suffers, which does not make it blameless. The same is said to every man by the fact of an evil conscience after sinning, as in Gen. 3:8 Adam and Eve hid from God after sinning. About the *causa peccati* it says in the 19th article of the Augustana: *Tametsi Deus creat et conservat naturam, tamen causa peccati est voluntas malorum, videlicet diaboli et impiorum.*¹⁵⁷²⁾ Thus man remains, as the dogmatists put it


 1571) The relationship of the serpent, Gen. 3:1 ff, to the devil, which the old theologians describe with the words: *Serpens verus, sed instrumentum diaboli*, should never have been questioned. Gen. 3:1, 14 the serpent is clearly described as a real serpent and v. 16 as the one acting through the serpent is called the devil, as the head is crushed by the woman's seed. So also 1 Jn. 3:8; 2 Cor. 11:3 and also Revelation 12:9: δ δφης ὁ ἀρχαῖος, δ καλούμενος διάβολος.

1572) That God, by His all-supporting and governing Providence, as well as by the fact that He rebukes sins with sins, is not the creating *causa*

(*subiectum quod peccati*), although he was originally seduced to sin by the devil and even now, as long as he does not believe in Christ, he is completely controlled by the devil (Col. 1:13) and cannot do anything but sin (Rom. 8:7). If it is asked where in man sin has its proper seat, it must be said: the proper seat (*subiectum quo*) of the ἀνομία is there in man where the νόμος originally had its seat and should still have it now, namely in the soul of man. The body is the seat of sin insofar as it is the organ of the soul. The contrary view, according to which the body, in contrast to the soul, is supposed to be the seat of sin, and the soul is deplored as an innocent captive, comes from paganism. Christ clearly states Matt. 15:19: ἐκ τῆς καρδίας come evil thoughts: murder, adultery, etc. So the heart is the real seat of sin and the birthplace of all internal and external sinful acts.

5. The consequences of sin. [^]

Because God has forbidden sin, that is, deviation from his νόμος ["Law"], sin makes man guilty before God (Rom. 3:19: πόδικος πας ὁ κόσμος τῷ ᾧ, *reatus culpa*) and brings him under the punishment that God has placed on sin (Gal. 3:10: επικατάρατος is everyone who does not abide in all that is written ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῶν νόμων, *reatus poenae*). Further, because behind the νόμος ["Law"], stands not human but divine authority, the nature and extent of the punishment is not to be determined according to human reasoning, but only according to God's revealed Word. According to God's revealed Word, sin is a capital offense in every case, that is, it makes one guilty of death in every case. This is what the Scriptures say in both the Old and New Testaments. Genesis 2:17:

of sin was explained earlier. Formula of Concord, M. 722, 83 [[Trigl. 1091, 83](#) ]: *Magna cura considerandum est, quando Dominus peccata peccatis punit, hoc est, cum eos, qui aliquando conversi fuerant, propter subsequentem securitatem carnalem, impenitentiam, contumaciam in sceleribus et propter voluntaria flagitia punit excaecatione et induratione, id non ita accipiendum esse, quasi Deus nunquam serio voluisset, ut tales ad agnitionem veritatis pervenirent et salutem consequerentur.* [[Google](#)] In contradiction with Scripture and confession, Fecht says, *Syllog. Controv.*, p. 109, in [Baier-Walther II, 274](#): *Impropria nec unquam imitanda, imo in Deum iniqua quorundam locutio est: Deum peccata peccatis punire.* [[Google](#)]

"Which day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die the death." In the New Testament, Rom. 5:12: *διὰ τῆς αμαρτίας ὁ θάνατος*. Death may be said to be threefold on the basis of Scripture. It is 1. The death of the soul, or "spiritual death," that is, the suspension of the soul's fellowship with God. It stands that the soul lives only through its fellowship with God, for which it was created. It lives by clinging to God, believing and trusting in Him and loving Him. With sin, however, comes the evil conscience and *eo ipso* the inner flight from God, that is, the separation of the soul from God. We see this very clearly in Adam. Adam was separated from God inwardly or according to the soul by the committed sin to the extent that he also fled from God outwardly when he heard the voice of God in the garden. Luther remarks on Gen. 3:11,¹⁵⁷³) that Adam, when he fled from God, was "in the midst of death and hell." Adam only came out of death and hell back to spiritual life when he heard the gospel of the woman's seed and believed, and thus the good conscience took the place of the evil conscience. Luther says in his explanation of the meaning of the words Gen. 3:15 (that the woman seed will crush the serpent's head):¹⁵⁷⁴) "This is the text which made Adam and Eve alive and brought them back to life from death, which they had lost through sin." Further:¹⁵⁷⁵) "The passage [when God said to the serpent, "The seed of the woman shall bruise thy head"] is absolution, that he might have absolved him, and us all. For if the seed be so strong as to bruise the serpent's head, it bruises also all his power: so is the devil overcome, and all the hurt that Adam had is gone, and cometh to stand where he stood before." Gen. 3:15: "He shall bruise thy head" is again excepted in the New Testament by 1 John 3:8: "For this purpose the Son of God appeared, that he might destroy the works of the devil." That this destruction of the works of the devil happened through the atoning death of Christ is explicitly stated in Jn. 12:31 and Jn. 16:11. From here we clearly see what is "spiritual life" and what is "spiritual death" in the sense of Scripture. Spiritual life is present in a man after the Fall when he has overcome the evil conscience through faith in Christ's atoning work and has come to peace with God. In the state of spiritual death

1573) St. [L. I, 215](#). 1574) [St. L. I, 240](#). 1575) St. [L. III, 66](#).

after the Fall, a man finds himself with an evil conscience before God because of his sin and is therefore inwardly fleeing from God. The Scriptures describe the death of the soul or spiritual death briefly with the words "living dead", as it is said in 1 Tim. 5:6 of the widow who lives in pleasure: ξῶσα τέθνηκεν. — 2. With the spiritual death or the death of the soul a catastrophe is bound for the sinful man, the awfulness of which is not recognized in its entirety only because it is a daily occurrence. This is the bodily death (*mors corporalis sive temporalis*). The bodily death is no less than a tearing apart of the man, the separation of soul and body, to whose binding or unity the man was created by God. That this in itself so terrible event loses its horror for Christians, because it leads their soul to paradise (Luke 23:43) and to being with Christ (Phil 1:23), comes from the fact that they were already awakened from spiritual death to spiritual life in this life through faith in Christ. — 3. Unless the guilt of sin is removed from the heart and conscience through faith in Christ, spiritual and physical death is followed by eternal death (*mors aeterna*). Eternal death is not annihilation or cessation of being, but eternal being according to soul and body in torment, 2 Thess. 1:9: δλεθρον αιώνιον, Matt. 25:46: κόλοις αιώνιος. Hollaz, *Examen, De Peccato*, qu. 20: [Mortem spiritualem sequitur mors corporalis et aeterna](#).

Guilt and punishment of sin are to be ceaselessly taught on the basis of the Scriptures, because man seeks to rebuke away guilt and punishment according to his depraved nature, according to the process of the devil and the fallen first men.¹⁵⁷⁶⁾ The temporal punishments, though before our eyes (disorder in the realm of nature: laborious toil, pain, calamities from storms, floods of water, earthquakes, wars, temporal death) are not regarded as judgments of God upon sin, but as natural events.¹⁵⁷⁷⁾ Eternal punishment, although also

1576) Gen. 3:4. 5 — Gen. 3:12-13.


1577) Luther's detailed explanation of Gen. 3:16-19, [St. L. I, 249 ff. 254](#): "Are all creatures against us and almost prepared for our downfall. How many perish by fire and water? What danger must be provided by wild and

witnessed by conscience (Rom. 1:32; Heb. 2:16), is questioned under erroneous calling on the love and mercy of God.¹⁵⁷⁸⁾ Also the Christians, as far as they still have the flesh in them, stand in constant danger of forgetting the guilt and punishment of sin. The words of Mark. 9:43-48 (the threat of "eternal fire") are, according to the context, also said to the believers. This is necessary so that they may constantly consider what the necessary consequence of their sins would be if they did not remain in spiritual life through daily repentance and crucify the flesh together with its lusts and desires. Hence the request of the believers Ps. 90:12: "Teach us to remember that we must die, that we may become wise!"

This leads to the question of what to think of the punishments that come upon the believers in this life, Ps. 73:14. The sins of the believers are not imputed to them, Ps. 4:8. The guilt and punishment of their sins is taken away from them, Rom. 8:33; Is. 53:5-6. They have peace with God, Rom. 5:1 ff. On the one hand, Scripture also calls those punishments a divine judgment on the sins of believers, 1 Pet. 4:17: "It is time for judgment (κρίμα) to begin at the house of God." On the other hand, Scripture says just as clearly that these punishments bear the character of paternal chastening (*castigationes paternae*) and have for their purpose preservation from apostasy, 1 Cor. 11:32: "When we are judged, we are chastened (παιδενόμεθα) by the Lord, lest we be condemned with the world" (κατακριθώμεν). Luther therefore calls the believers' punishments "a gracious and cheerful punishment."¹⁵⁷⁹⁾

poisonous animals, which do harm not only to our bodies, but also to that which is grown for our food! Not to mention that we ourselves also fall apart and strangle [one another], as if there were no other pestilence and misfortune creeping up on us." [Col. 255](#): "What do thorns, thistles, weapons, fire, caterpillars, flies, fleas, lice, bugs, etc., all find but messengers preaching to us of sin and the wrath of God? Therefore we live knowingly and with seeing eyes in a more than Egyptian darkness. Even though we are reminded of God's wrath everywhere and by all creatures, and it is almost put into our eyes, we do not pay attention to it, but love this temporal life and cling to it as if it were the only pleasure."

1578) The more detailed explanation under the section "Eternal Damnation," Vol. III, 612 f.

1579) [St. L. 1. 243](#). Cf. about the believers' rebuke Apology, M. 196, 53 ff. [[Trigl. 299, 53 ff.](#) , in contrast to the Romans, who ascribe to themselves a satisfactory character to these rebukes.

Original Sin. [^] (*De peccato originali.*)

1. the concept of original sin. [^]

The original sin, that is, the sin which is not done but is inherent in every man since Adam's fall, comprises two things: a. the hereditary guilt (*culpa hereditaria*), that is, the guilt of Adam's one sin, which God imputes to all men; b. the hereditary corruption (*corruptio humanae naturae hereditaria*), which, as a result of the imputation of Adam's guilt, is propagated by natural descent from fallen parents to all descendants. Scriptural evidence for the hereditary guilt: Rom. 5:18: Δὶ ἐνός — namely Adam's — παραπτώματος εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπων εἰς κατάκριμα, "through one sin came upon all men the judgment of damnation"; v. 19: Διὰ τῆς παρακοῆς τὸν ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου — namely Adam's — Ἀμαρτωλοὶ κατεοθάτησαν οἱ πολλοί, "through the disobedience of one man. the many were set down as sinners". Scriptural evidence of hereditary corruption perpetuated by natural birth: Ps. 61:7: "Behold, I am begotten of sinful seed, and my mother conceived me in sins"; Jn. 3:6: "That which is born of the flesh (ἐκ τῆς σαρκός) is flesh" (σὰρξ). That σὰρξ here denotes not merely the body, but the whole sinful man, and indeed just after the soul with all its powers and movements, is evident from the context. It denotes the condition of a man who is outside the kingdom of God and must be born again if he is to enter the kingdom of God, v. 3. 6. We have a parallel for this meaning of σὰρξ Rom. 8:7: "To be carnally minded (τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκός) is enmity against God."

Dogmatists distinguish between τιμωρία and παιδεία. By τιμωρία they mean the appropriate road of sin that comes to those who despise the atoning blood of Christ (Hebrews 12:29) and consists of nothing less than eternal damnation. By παιδεία they understand the *castigationes paternae*, which are not punishments in the strict sense (*non ad vindicandam culpam iniuriamque Deo illatam compensandam inferuntur*), but have the purpose of saving from eternal damnation those who are remitted guilt of sin and punishment of sin through faith in the vicarious satisfaction of Christ, 1 Cor. 11:32.

The human contradiction has been especially directed against the hereditary guilt. Pelagians, Socinians, Arminians, even newer Lutherans claim that only what a man has done himself can be imputed to him as sin.¹⁵⁸⁰⁾ The strength of the contradiction runs through all degrees, from the simple rejection to the decided blasphemy.¹⁵⁸¹⁾ We must freely admit that human feeling, according to the blindness that is in us (ἰσχοτισμένοι ῥῆ διανοία, Eph. 4:18), is downright indignant against the fact of original guilt. But this does not change in the least the fact, which God testifies in His Word Rom. 5:18-19 testifies, that through one man's sin there came about a sentence of condemnation (κατάκριμα) upon all men, and that through one man's disobedience the whole multitude (οἱ πολλοί) was placed before God in the category of sinners (αμαρτωλοὶ κατεστάθησαν). Next, the imputation of Adam's sin is clearly before us in the fact that after Adam's fall God causes all men to be born in hereditary corruption (*corruptio hereditaria*).¹⁵⁸²⁾ As for the righteousness of this

1580) The quotations from the writings of the Pelagians, Socinians and Arminians in Quenstedt I, 995. — About American sects (Socinians, Unitarians, Arminians, Quakers, Shepherds, Mormons, Seventh-day Adventists, etc.) cf. the quotations in [Günther, Symbolik 4, p. 152](#) ff. [also Engelder's *Popular Symbolics*, p. 89, and [Index](#)] — On more recent Lutherans, such as [Vilmar](#), the quotation in [Baier-Walther II, 291 sq.](#) from [Vilmar's Dogmatik 1, 370](#) ff. What the dogmatists teach about the doctrine of hereditary guilt is briefly and correctly presented in [Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 315](#) f.-on the rejection of hereditary guilt on the part of more recent theologians, even most conservative ones, [Nitzsch-Stephan, p. 327](#) ff. [see [Nitzsch 2nd ed. 1896 p. 288](#) ff.]

1581) The Pelagian [Julianus](#): *Non posse a Deo peccatum alienum parvulis imputari*; at Quenstedt I, 995. — [Socinus](#): *Falsum est, Adami delictum et inobedientiam hominibus imputatum fuisse*; and the Socinian [Volkeli](#): *Nos pernegamus, Adami peccatum illius posteris imputari*; at Quenstedt, l.c.. — The [Arminians](#) in their *Apology contra Censuram Leydensium*, p. 84: *Nec Scriptura, nec veracitas, nec sapientia, nec bonitas divina, nec peccati natura, nec ratio (character) iustitiae atque aequitatis permittunt, ut sic Adami posteris peccatum Adami imputatum fuisse dicant*; at Quenstedt, l. c. — The [Quakers](#) in their *Declaration of Faith* of 1887: "We rejoice that we believe that sin is imputed to no one until they transgress the divine law, after sufficient ability is given to understand it (p. 27); in [Günther, Symbolik 4, p. 153](#). The Quaker [Barclay](#) in his *Apology* (th. 4, 5) addresses hereditary guilt as a barbarism contrary to Scripture; in [Günther, op. cit.](#)

1582) [Höneck](#), *Ev.-luth. Dogmatik II, 413*, according to the procedure of old dogmatists: "That now all men born since Adam are born equal as being in the state of perdition, into which Adam got by the fall,

divine action, we must not lose sight of the further fact that Scripture parallels the imputation of Adam's sin with the imputation of Christ's righteousness to all mankind, Rom. 5:18-19: ὥς δι' ἑνὸς παραπτώματος εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους εἰς κατάκριμα οὕτως καὶ δι' ἑνὸς δικαιοῦματος εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους εἰς δικαίωσιν ζωῆς, and v. 19: ὥσπερ γὰρ διὰ τῆς παρακοῆς τοῦ ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου ἁμαρτωλοὶ καταστάθησαν οἱ πολλοὶ οὕτως καὶ διὰ τῆς ὑπακοῆς τοῦ ἑνὸς δίκαιοι κατασταθήσονται οἱ πολλοί. He who declares the imputation of Adam's sin unjust and therefore rejects it, must consequently also declare the imputation of Christ's righteousness unjust and reject it, thus taking a standpoint outside the Christian church. — As for the proof of hereditary guilt, a reminder is in order. We freely point out for the righteousness of imputation of Adam's sin the fact that Adam was the moral as well as the physical head of all mankind, and that therefore the one sinful act of Adam is justly imputed to all his descendants.¹⁵⁸³ But against this the question is raised whether it is right that the son should bear the iniquity of the father.¹⁵⁸⁴ We may well say: Adami voluntas erat interpret voluntatis omnium hominum; that is, God foresaw that we would have acted just as Adam did under the same circumstances. But against this it was and is objected that it seems to be more justified to let each human individual "interpret himself". Therefore we must

this has its reason only in the fact that God sees the deed of Adam as their deed, counts it as guilt and lets them be born in the state of misery of the original sinfulness as in one deserved by themselves. The same, p. 408 f.: "The fall of Adam counts to all men as guilt and punishment, not only because the sinfulness (*peccatum originis originatum*) acquired by the fall and inherited by them makes them condemnable before God (*imputatio mediata*), but also in such a way that the fall of Adam itself (*peccatum originis originans*) is imputed to them as guilt (*imputatio immediata*).

1583) Thus Quenstedt I, 995 quotes from Meisner's anthropology: *In unoquoque corpore, sive sit physicum sive politicum sive mysticum, id, quod facit caput, quatenus caput, hoc toti corpori iure imputatur. ... Facta magistratus toti reipublicae, facta patris familias toti familiae imputantur, adeo ut liberi ob crimen rebellionis vel laesae maiestatis, licet a solo patre commissum sit, omnibus bonis iure spoliuntur a principe.* [[Google](#)]

1584) Thus Israel argues with its God, Ezek. 18.

finally rely on one reason, before which all contradiction naturally falls silent. This is the reason to which Quenstedt¹⁵⁸⁵⁾ refers after citing several other reasons with the words: *Deus ut iudex iure quo pollet summo crimen maiestatis laesae etiam in posteris ... punit*, "God as judge, in accordance with his supreme judicial law, rebuke the crime of violating his divine majesty even in the descendants." This fact of divine imputation is now one of the "*stubborn facts*" against which to argue is futile, foolish, and ungodly. God always acts justified, even where we do not understand Him. We cannot and should not measure God's righteousness by human standards.¹⁵⁸⁶⁾ Moreover, let us not forget the other fact published in the Scriptures, namely, that the same God who condemned all men for Adam's sin has already justified all men for Christ's righteousness. This is, after all, what the apostle Paul sets forth in detail in the passage Rom. 5:12-21. In order to prevent any misunderstanding of this passage, the apostle himself summarizes v. 18 his detailed^ exposition with *ἀρα οὖν* ("therefore now") in the summarium: "As by one sin came condemnation judgment upon all men, so also by one righteousness came justification of life upon all men." Christians understand this by singing, "Just as we were all rejected by a foreign sin in Adam, so we were all reconciled by a foreign grace in Christ.." ¹⁵⁸⁷⁾

The fact of the hereditary corruption (*corruptio hereditaria*) is recognized to some extent also by human reason. We see therefore that also pagan writers refer to a tendency to evil inherent in man from birth. Horace:

1585) *Systema* 1, 994.


1586) [Baier II, 290](#) points to this, even if somewhat shyly, with the words: *Ut subtilius disputetur, quomodo Deus lapsum protoplastorum posteris ipsorum nondum existentibus ita imputare potuerit, ut propterea etiam ipsos iustitia originali destitutos et peccatores nasci oporteret, non opus est, nec fortasse consultum. Sufficit enim τοῦτο εἶναι revelatum, etsi τοῦτο ignoretur.* [[Google](#)]


1587) St. L. *Gesangbuch*, No. 236, 3. Also No. 27, 2: "What I lost in Adam and Eve by dying, You have chosen for me, Jesus, by living and suffering. Good God, all my sorrow and distress ended when you were born."

Nam vitii nemo sine nascitur; optimus ille est, qui minimis urgetur.¹⁵⁸⁸ The same: Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret.¹⁵⁸⁹ Cicero: Simulatque editi in lucem et suscepti sumus in omni continuo pravitate et in summa opinionum perversitate versamur, ut paene cum lacte nutricis errorem suxisse videamur.¹⁵⁹⁰ But the whole extent of the innate sinful corruption and the origin of this corruption from the fall of the first men is known only from the revelation of the Holy Scriptures. To this fact the Smalcald Articles point out with the words: "Such original sin is so utterly a Lief evil corruption of nature that no reason can know it, but must be believed from Scripture revelation."¹⁵⁹¹ How little, for example, Cicero recognized of the depravity of human nature, in spite of his "ut paene cum lacte nutricis errorem suxisse videamur," is evident from the fact that both in the preceding and in the following he declares human nature to be essentially good, and attributes the prevailing depravity to the evil influence of nurses, teachers, and much-heard and much-read poets. The Formula of Concord therefore remarks that "no philosopher, no papist, no sophist, indeed no human reason, however acute, can give the right explanation [of the depth of hereditary corruption], but all understanding and explanation must be taken from Holy Scriptures alone."¹⁵⁹² On the origin of hereditary perdition from the fall of the first men, Rolle says:¹⁵⁹³ "Without divine revelation, no one can know that the inclination to evil comes from the fall of the first parents, is truly sin, and that man is therefore subject to eternal damnation."

With regard to hereditary corruption erring: 1. All who deny hereditary corruption altogether, claiming that sin passes from parents to children not by natural descent (*generatione*) but by evil example (*exemplo*), against John. 3:6: Το γεγεννημένον ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς σὰρξ ἐστίν,¹⁵⁹⁴ 2. All those who admit an inherited corruption but

1588) *Satir.* I, 3, 68 sq. 1589) *Epist.* 1. 10, 24.

1590) *Tuscul. Disp.* III, 1. 1591) M. 310, 3. [[Trigl. 477, I, 3](#) 

1592) M. 586, 60 [[Trigl. 879, 60](#) ] 1593) Quoted in [Baier-Walther II, 281](#).

1594) So the Pelagians: Peccatum non propagatione in alios homines ex primo homine, sed imitatione transisse. (In Seeberg, *Dogmengeschichte* I, 263,

deny that it is sin because *peccatum* must always be *voluntarium*, that is, it must come from deliberation, self-decision, etc., against Eph. 2:3: τέκνα φύσει οργής ["And were by nature children of wrath"];¹⁵⁹⁵ 3. all who diminish hereditary corruption. This is done on the part of the Semipelagians and Synergists of all ages, in that they do not consider man dead (νεκρός) in sins after the fall (Eph. 2:1, 5), but still ascribe to him, in various degrees and under various appellations, so much ability in spiritual things, that the attainment of the grace of God and of salvation depends not only

from Augustine's *De Peccator. Meritis et Remiss.* 1, 9, 9; cf. in Quenstedt 1, 999 the quotation from Augustine's *De Nat. et Grat.*, c. 9: In Adamo peccasse omnes, non propter peccatum nascendi origine attractum, sed propter imitationem dictum est. Just as among the heathen Seneca, *Epist.* 69: Erras, si existimas, nobiscum nasci vitia; supervenerunt, ingesta sunt. (In Quenstedt 1, 999.) Likewise the Socinians; quotations in Günther, Symbolik 4, p. 148 [*Pop. Symbolics*, pp. 396, 403]; in Quenstedt 1, 1000; in Plitt, *Grundriß der Symbolik* 3, p. 154.

1595) Thus Zwingli in *Fidei Ratio*, Niemeyer, x. 20: Velimus igitur nolimus admittere cogimur, peccatum originale, ut est in filiis Adae, non proprie peccatum esse, quomodo iam expositum est; non enim est facinus contra legem. Morbus igitur est proprie et conditio. Rome doctrines Trid, sess. V, 5, Smets, p. 18 f., that the inclination to sin (*concupiscentia, fomes*) remaining after baptism is no longer sin, although Scripture sometimes calls it sin: *Hanc concupiscentiam, quam aliquando (Rom. 6:7. 8; Col. 3) apostolus peccatum appellat, sancta Synodus declarat, ecclesiam catholicam nunquam intellexisse peccatum appellari, quod vere et proprie in renatis peccatum sit, sed quia ex peccato est et ad peccatum inclinat. Si quis autem contrarium senserit, anathema sit.* Likewise Cat. Rom., *De Baptismo*, qu. 32: *qui tamen motus (animi appetitio natura sua rationi repugnans), si voluntatis consensum aut negligentiam coniunctam non habeat, a vera peccati natura longe abest.* [Google] — It has already been pointed out that among the newer theologians also Hofmann lets sin begin only with the "conscious" self-determination and therefore consequently denies that hereditary perdition is sin. On the American sects which deny original sin as sin, Günther, Symbolik 4, p. 152 ff. On the Methodists, Günther, p. 151: "The Methodists, whose Articles of Faith are an excerpt from the 39 Articles of the Episcopalians, omit the important words in the Article on Original Sin: 'This corruption of nature remains even in those who are born again. ... And although there is no condemnation in the born-again and believers for Christ's sake, yet the apostle testifies that lust itself has the nature and character of sin'. ... The doctrine that evil lust is truly sin even in the born-again does not fit with their doctrine of entire sanctification." On Wesley's saying, "Such [involuntary] transgressions *you* call sins, if you please; *I do not*" cf. vol. III, 37, note 112.

on God's grace for Christ's sake, but also on man's cooperation, his self-determination or self-decision, his right conduct and his lesser guilt in comparison with others, etc.¹⁵⁹⁶

Because in every reduction of hereditary corruption, whether in a gross Roman-Arminian way, or in a fine and subtle way,

1596) The papal doctrine teaches that in fallen man the capacity for good, that is, for attaining justification and salvation, is not completely lost, but only weakened. *Trid. sess. VI, can. 4: Si quis dixerit, liberum hominis arbitrium a Deo motum et excitatum nihil cooperari assentiendo Deo excitanti et vocanti, quo ad obtinendam iustificationis gratiam, se disponat ac praeparet, ... anathema sit. Can. 5: Si quis liberum hominis arbitrium post Adae peccatum amissum et extinctum esse dixerit, ... anathema sit. Sess. VI, cap. 1*, it says of the *liberum arbitrium* in heathen and Jews: *minime extinctum, viribus licet attenuatum et inclinatum*. The Arminians represent essentially the Roman doctrine, of which [Möhl](#) (*Symbolik* 5, p. 634) gives them credit with the words: "Their doctrines on this (on hereditary perdition) find pretty much the Catholic ones, for which reason they also, like the Synod of Trent, speak of an awakening grace, which only stirs up the powers still existing in fallen man, in contrast to the Lutheran conceptions, according to which the higher (the spiritual) powers in man must first be created again." [Quenstedt](#) quotes 1, 1103 from the Arminian *Collatio Hagiensis* (1610): *Duae sunt fidei et conversionis causae, prima: gratia Dei tanquam praecedens et excitans, secunda: voluntas hominis sequens et cooperans. Nec donum fidei datur sine cooperatione voluntatis humanae. Affirmamus, hominem cooperarium esse in regeneratione*. In the *Apologia pro Confessione Remonstrantium*, [[Google](#)] Leyden 1630, p. 162, it is said that the effect of God's grace sine cooperatione liberae voluntatis humanae would not succeed. About the Arminian sects: Methodists, Mennonites, etc., see the quotations in [Günther, Symbolik](#) 4, p. 159 ff. — That also the synergistic Lutherans, from the later Melancthon down to more recent times, diminish the doctrine of inheritance from Scripture, comes to view in detail [vol. II, 542 ff.](#) in the doctrine of conversion, especially under the sections: "The Objections to the Sole Efficacy of God," [p. 564 ff.](#) All talk of a facultas se applicandi ad gratiam, of a liberum arbitrium established before conversion, according to which man can "set himself," "determine for himself," "decide for himself" *pro* or *contra*, or that the conversion which actually occurs depends on the right conduct of man or on a lesser fault — all these and other ways of speaking presuppose that man is not dead after the Fall, but only half-dead or apparently dead in sins, i.e., with their doctrine of hereditary perdition they do not belong to the Lutheran, but to the Roman and Arminian camp.

which has also crept into the Lutheran Church, *sola gratia* and with it the whole Christian doctrine is consequently abandoned, we leave here a special section on the effect of hereditary corruption on the mind and will of man.

2. The effect of hereditary corruption on the mind and will of man. ^

The natural man, that is, man as he is by nature after the Fall, still has some understanding in natural things, that is, in things pertaining to earthly life,¹⁵⁹⁷⁾ but he is utterly incapable of knowing the truth in things pertaining to the attainment of the grace of God and salvation. The gospel, which is his only salvation after the fall,¹⁵⁹⁸⁾ in his natural condition he regards as folly, and can only regard as folly, 1 Cor. 2:14: μωρία γάρ αὐτῷ ἐστίν, καὶ οὐ δύναται γινῶναι. The law, on the other hand, which nevertheless consigns him to the wrath of God and to damnation,¹⁵⁹⁹⁾ he holds to be the natural-minded way of salvation. Hence the Scripture exhibits to all natural-minded men, in regard to their intelligence, the testimony Eph. 4:18: ἐσκοτισμένοι κατὰ διανοίαν; Eph. 5:8: σκότος; Is. 9:1: "The people so walking in darkness"; Is. 60:2: "darkness covers the earth"; Gal. 3:3: ἀνόητοί ἐστε. This lack of intelligence cannot be lifted even by any human training and culture, as the Scriptures also testify very clearly that the σοφία Θεοῦ, that is, the Gospel of Christ crucified for the sins of the world, is not recognized even by the aristocrats of mankind.¹⁶⁰⁰⁾ As for the will of the natural man toward the Law of God, Scripture establishes the facts, a. that it is indeed directed against God's law, b. that it also cannot but be directed against God's law, *non potest non peccare*; Rom. 8:7: τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς ἐχθρὰ εἰς Θεόν· τῷ γὰρ νόμῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ οὐχ ὑποτάσσεται, οὐδὲ γὰρ δύναται. Even if the natural man wills what is outwardly good, e.g., e.g., feed the hungry, clothe the naked, etc., he cannot want this out of love for God or for God's sake, but

1597) [Augustana, Art. XVIII.](#) 1598) Jn. 3:16-18; Acts 4:12 etc.

1599) Gal. 3:10-12. 1600) 1 Cor. 2:6-9; Col. 2:8.

at best, only out of natural compassion. This is good and noble in the natural sphere or in the sphere of civil life. It also has temporal reward, like *iustitia civilis* in general;¹⁶⁰¹⁾ but it is and remains sinful before God, because it does not approach the demand that God makes on every man in his law. God's law is νόμος πνευματικός (Rom. 7:14). It is not satisfied with works that come from any motives. Rather, it makes the very certain demand that love for God be the motive in all man's actions, Matt. 22:37: "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind." But from where should the love for God come to the natural man? He has an evil conscience before God because of his transgression of the divine law and is therefore in constant inner flight from God. He actually lives without hope and without God (as αθεος) in the world, as Paul convinces all heathens from their own experience Eph. 2:12. With this state of affairs, how could he love God and give his works to God! The more God's law invades him with its demands, the more the fact turns out: το φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς ἐχθρὰ εἰς θεόν (Rom. 8:7). Luther's oft-repeated phrase, "He wishes there were no God," is no exaggeration. In short, the natural man stands hostile to both God's gospel (1 Cor. 1:23) and God's law (Rom. 8:7) according to his inner disposition. This is the effect of hereditary corruption on the mind and will of man.

What complete disruption of mind and will entered human nature through the Fall is demonstrated by Luther in the behavior of Adam and Eve after they transgressed God's commandment. Adam is, Luther says on Gen. 3:10, "an

 1601) Cf. the further explanation under the section "The Good Works of the Heathen," Vol. III, p. 52 ff. We also have an example of this in Acts 28:2 ff, where the hospitality shown by the heathen inhabitants of the island of Malta to the apostle Paul and the whole shipwrecked traveling party is described: "The little people" (βάρβαροι, the barbarians) "showed us no small friendship" (φιλανθρωπία, love of man), "kindled a fire, and took us all out for the rain that had come upon us, and for the cold." Again, the temporal reward is mentioned. Paul first heals the sick father of the governor of the island, and then "the others in the island came also that had diseases, and were made whole," vv. 8-9.

another man" (*alius est factus, mutatus*).¹⁶⁰² Adam's mind has sunk below zero, and his will has been transformed into an evil will. Luther's whole elaboration on this point is well worth reading repeatedly.¹⁶⁰³ Luther opposes Rome's false doctrine of the divine image as a *donum superadditum*, after the loss of which the natural powers of man remained essentially intact. He says: "The scholastics argue that the righteousness in which Adam was created was not in Adam's nature, but was like an ornament or gift, so that man was first adorned, as when one puts a wreath on a beautiful virgin, which wreath is not a part of the virgin's nature, but is something special and separate from nature, which is added from outside and can be removed again without violating nature. Therefore they argue about man and devils, that even though they have lost the righteousness in which they were created, they have kept their natural powers pure, as they were created in the first place. But from such doctrine, because it belittles original sin, one should beware as from a poison." Luther then uses Adam's and Eve's addresses and actions after the Fall to show how unintelligent and godless both had become as a result of the Fall. He demonstrates the lack of understanding by the flight from God: "We cannot doubt that reason is corrupt, because we see the plot by which Adam and Eve think to be safe. For is this not the highest folly (*extrema stultitia*): first, to subject themselves to impossible things, as they do because they flee, from whom they cannot flee nor be hidden; second, to make their escape in such a foolish way (*stulto modo*) that they think to be safe under the trees, since no iron wall, no great mountains could protect them? ... And as Adam had made his escape foolishly (*stulte*), so he also gives foolish answer (*stultissime respondet*). So even after sin he lacks all wisdom and counsel." As the reason of his escape from God, Adam mentions hearing the voice of God. But this was a quite incomprehensible reason. Adam "had heard the voice of the Lord before, when he was forbidden

1602) [St. L. I, 213](#). Opp. ex., Erl. I, 220.

1603) [St. L. I, 199-223](#). opp. ex., Erl. I, 206-231.

to eat from the tree. Why then was he not afraid and hidden? Why did he stand there joyful and erect, seeing and hearing God before his eyes? Thus it follows that he is no longer the Adam that he had been, but is all mixed up (*mutatus*) and has become another man, that he wants to protect and answer for himself with a lying cause." Adam gives his nakedness as another reason for his flight from God. "But the poor man does not consider that he did not have this fear before, nor was he ashamed that he was naked. For since God had thus created him, why should he be ashamed of the nakedness which God had created? Before, he had walked naked in Paradise before God and all creatures, knowing that God loved him and [he] had his delight in God; but now he is ashamed that he is naked, flees from God, and hides himself." Furthermore, when God reproaches Adam with the real and only reason for his flight and his shame because of his nakedness, namely the reason that he had eaten of the tree of which he was commanded, "Thou shalt not eat of it," Adam reveals all the more the corruption of his heart and will that had occurred. He says, "The woman whom thou hast set before me gave me of the tree, and I did eat." Luther describes how it looked in Adam's heart during this defensive speech: "Since Adam is thus convicted that he cannot deny the deed, he wants to defend it with rights (*iure*) and says: If you had not given me the woman, I would not have eaten from the tree. So he ascribes to God that he has sinned, and accuses him [God] on account of his sin." With regard to Eve, Luther adds: "Now also follows the example of Eve, who, having been corrupted by sin, is nothing better than Adam (*nihilo melior est quam Adam*), who wanted to be thought innocent and threw the blame out at God for having given him the woman. Here Eve also wants to excuse herself and blames the serpent, which was also God's creature, and confesses that she ate the apple, but the serpent, she says, which you created and let walk around in paradise, has deceived me. Is not this to accuse his Creator, and to deny the guilt of himself?"



We will have to admit that in the foregoing Luther does not explain the corruption of human nature (according to mind and will) introduced by the Fall according to his own thoughts, but on the basis of God's own Word, Gen. 3:7-13, thus


completely correctly. And this corrupted kind has passed on to the whole human race by natural descent from the first fallen parent, as Christ testifies Jn. 3:6: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." And this is what all statements of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament say. God testifies in Gen. 6:5 to all men that all imagination of the thoughts of their heart is only evil forever (בְּקָרְבָּן כָּל-הַיּוֹמִים [HEBREW]). We have an all-sided description of the corrupt human nature according to understanding and will compiled from the Old Testament in the New Testament, Rom. 3:10-18: "There is not he that is righteous, neither is there any. There is no one who has understanding; there is no one who asks about God. ... They do not know the way of peace. There is no fear of God before their eyes." At the same time, it is emphasized that this description applies to the whole human world, Jews and Greeks alike, v. 9:19. — This description of original sinful destruction has already been completely explained by the Lutheran Church in the second article of the Augustana: "Of original sin. Further, we teach that after Adam's fall all men who are born naturally are conceived and born in sins, that is, they are all full of evil desire and inclination from their mother's womb and cannot have true fear of God, true faith in God by nature; that this same inherent pestilence and original sin is truly sin and condemns all those to eternal wrath of God who are not born again through baptism and the Holy Spirit. ... Besides these, the Pelagians and others are rejected, who have not original sin for sin, that they might make nature godly by natural powers, to the dishonor of the suffering and merit of Christ." [According to the German; [Trigl. 43](#), [X](#)]

3. The negative and positive side of the Original Corruption. [^](#)

The Holy Scriptures describe hereditary corruption not only as a defect, that is, as a lack of righteousness, but also as an evil desire (*concupiscentia*), that is, as the competent inward judgment of evil, Gal. 5:17 : Ἡ σαρξ ἐπ' ὀθυμει κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος; Rom. 7:23: νόμος ἀντιστρατενόμενος τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ νοῦς. Both sides are mentioned in the 2nd article of the Augustana, where it says in the description of original sin: *Omnes homines secundum naturam propagati*


nascuntur cum peccato, hoc est, sine metu et fiducia erga Deum et cum concupiscentia. [Google] In so far as the original sinful corruption is *concupiscentia*, we can also call it something positive.¹⁶⁰⁴ On the other hand, original sin is not something positive in the sense of substance, if by substance we understand *substantia materialis, quae proprie subsistit*, that is, a thing that exists for itself or has its own separate existence. If we distinguish between substance and accident in such a way that by substance we understand a thing that exists for itself, but by accident something that adheres to another thing as a separable property, then hereditary corruption is certainly to be called an accident, because human nature is God's creature even after the fall and as God's creature is good in itself and remains good. This is to be held against any form of Manichaeism insofar as it assumes two substances, one good and one evil.¹⁶⁰⁵


1604) The Apology (80, 15 ff. [[Trigl. 43, 1b](#) ]) takes in detail that the original sin includes both, not only the lack of the original right nature of human nature, but also the evil desire (*concupiscentia*) that took the place of the right nature. *Nos igitur recte* [in the 2nd article of the Augustana] [[Trigl. 111, 26 f.](#) ] *expressimus utrumque in descriptione peccati originalis, videlicet defectus illos: non posse Deo credere, non posse Deum timere ac diligere; item, habere concupiscentiam, quae carnalia quaerit contra Verbum Dei, hoc est, quaerit non solum voluptates corporis, sed etiam sapientiam et iustitiam carnalem, et confidit his bonis, contemnens Deum.* The same, adds The Apology, was taught not only by ancient but also by more recent teachers "who had some understanding" (*cordatiores*). So also does the Scripture teach: *Nam Paulus interdum expresse nominat defectum, ut 1 Cor. 2:14: "Animalis homo non percipit ea, quae Spiritus Dei sunt."* Alibi (Rom. 7:5) *concupiscentiam nominat efficacem in membris et parientem malos fructus.* [Google] The Apology also takes Luther's doctrine of hereditary corruption to the slanders of the papists: *Semper ita scripsit [Lutherus], quod baptismus tollat reatum peccati originalis (the hereditary sin), etiamsi materiale, ut isti vocant, peccati maneat, videlicet concupiscentia.* [Google] This agrees with Augustine when the latter says: *Peccatum in baptismo remittitur, non ut non sit, sed ut non imputetur.* The Apology also proves how strong the positive character of the original sinful corruption is from the fact that this corruption belongs to the punishment (*poena*) that God took from Adam's fall. Human nature is given over to the tyranny of the devil, who holds it captive in his kingdom and now *dementat impiis opinionibus et erroribus et impellit ad omnis generis peccata.*

1605) The Formula of Concord expresses this in its first article, "On Original Sin," p. 519 f. [[Trigl. 779, 2 ff.](#) ]: "For not only Adam's and Eve's body and soul before the Fall, but also our body and soul after the Fall,

On the other hand, it must be noted against Pelagianism and synergism that the original sinful corruption is such an accidens, whereby human nature is completely corrupted, that is, incapable of all spiritual good and inclined to all evil. Rom. 7:18: "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing." It is also to be noted that original sinful corruption attaches itself to human nature in such a way that it cannot be separated from human nature again by any human power and effort, but only by the effect of divine grace and omnipotence for Christ's sake, Rom. 8:3: το αδύνατον τον νόμον. The Formula of Concord summarizes this thus:¹⁶⁰⁶ "We believe, teach, and confess, in turn, that original sin is not a bad (*levis*), but such deep corruption of human nature that nothing healthy or undecayed remains in the body and soul of man, his inward and outward powers, but as we sing in the church: 'By Adam's fall is all human nature and being corrupted'? What pity unspeakable, not by reason, but from God's Word alone may be known, and that nature and such corruption of nature no one can separate but God alone." Therefore, the first article of the Formula of Concord is admittedly prompted by Flacius' perverse and stubbornly defended expression that the original sin of fallen man is substance. At the same time this article is also opposed to the Pelagianism, Semipelagianism and Synergism of Strigel and all Philippists.¹⁶⁰⁷

regardless of their corruption, God created, which God also still recognizes as His work, as it is written in Job 10: 'Your hands have worked me and made all that I am about and around.'" To suppose that human nature as such, or according to its substance, is sin, would contravene the articles of the Christian faith of creation, redemption, sanctification, and resurrection. For Christ took our human nature, though without sin, yet according to its nature or substance as his work, also redeemed it as his work, also sanctified it as his work, also raised it from the dead and adorned it gloriously as his work. But the original sin he has not taken, not redeemed, not sanctified, will also not awaken it in the elect, neither decorate nor make them saved, but it will be completely eradicated in the resurrection.

1606) M., pp. 520, 8-10 [[Trigl. 781, 8-10](#) 

1607) This is clear from the antitheses p. 520 f., 1-6. [[Trigl. 781, 11-16](#) ] Cf. Carpzov's judgment on Flacius (*Isagoge in Libros Symbolicos*, p. 1160): *Si linguam*

4. The subject of the hereditary corruption. [△]

That all men who are naturally descended from Adam are subjects of the hereditary perdition has already been stated according to its various relations. Only Christ is excepted among men, because, according to His human nature, He did not take upon Himself human nature naturally, but through the action of the Holy Spirit. Matt. 1:20: *Τὸ ἐν αὐτῇ (Mary) γεννηθῆναι ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου.* [*Conceptus est de Spiritu Sancto. Natus ex Maria virgine.*](#) Therefore Christ is expressly called γεννώμενον ἅγιον according to His human nature (Luke 1:35).¹⁶⁰⁸ As for the Virgin Mary, she is exempt from hereditary perdition not by Holy Scriptures, but by a decree of Pius IX of 1854 in the interest of Mariolatry.¹⁶⁰⁹

corrigere voluisset, nunquam tantas turbas dedisset et concordare cum eo facile potuissent orthodoxi. Flacius himself called the original sin corms substanbials, but he still distinguished from the *forma substantialis* the *forma materialis*. *Forma materialis* was not the original sin. It seems that Flacius understood by *forma materialis* what other men call substance, and by *forma substantialis* what we call accident. Carpozov says a. op. cit. further on Flacius: *Non enim hominem absolute seu in absoluta sua substantia considerabat, sed concrete et cum statu suo, atque per essentiam et formam essentialem non intelligebat substantiam ipsam, prout significat rem per se subsistentem et opponitur accidentali praedicamento, sed essentiam illam, quae homini, non qua homo est, sed qua talis sive corruptus est, competit, nempe formam accidentariam, quae cum subiecto absoluto constituit ens concretum et homini corrupto essentialis est, ita ut, quamdiu et quantum corruptus est, ne quidem cogitatione possit separari ab eo corruptio seu vitiositas.* Cf. the very detailed and thorough exposition by F. Bente in [*Historical Introductions to the Symbolical Books*, XV: "The Flacian Controversy."](#) [Triglotta I, 144 ff.](#) [[BookOfConord here](#)]. Also G. Plitt in RE.² IV, 563 ff. Plitt's remark that Flacius was "habitually and out of ignorance" condemned beyond measure is correct.

1608) Cf. the section "Peculiarities of the Human Nature of Christ," [Vol. II. 77 ff.](#)

1609) In Baier-Walther [II, 294](#): *Declaramus, pronuntiamus et definimus: doctrinam, quae tenet, beatissimam virginem Mariam in primo instanti suae conceptionis fuisse singulari omnipotentis Dei gratia et privilegio, intuitu meritorum Christi Iesu, Salvatoris humani generis, ab omni originalis culpa labe praeservatam immunem, esse a Deo revelatam atque idcirco ab omnibus fidelibus firmiter constanterque credendam. Quapropter si qui secus, ac a nobis definitum est, quod Deus avertat, praesumpserint corde sentire, ii noverint ac porro sciant, se proprio iudicio condemnatos, naufragium circa fidem passos esse et ab unitate ecclesiae defecisse.* [[Google](#)]

In describing the subject of original sin, it must also be carefully noted where in man the *corruptio hereditaria*, the hereditary corruption, has its proper seat (*subiectum quo peccati originalis, subiectum proprium*, *πρώτον δεκτικόν*). The dogmatists express themselves thus: The soul of man is the primary, the body the secondary seat of hereditary corruption, because the body is the organ of the soul. Baier:¹⁶¹⁰ *Subiectum quo peccati originalis primarium est anima cum suis facultatibus, intellectu, voluntate et appetitu sensitivo; secundario tamen et consequenter etiam membra corporis huc recte referuntur.* [[Google](#)] For a more detailed explanation the dogmatists add: As before the Fall the body participated in the original righteousness by being the organ of the righteous soul and serving it for works of righteousness and holiness, so now after the fall the body also participates in unrighteousness, because it stands in an organ relation to the soul, which is corrupt in all its powers, and therefore is put with all its members into the service of unrighteousness. The Scripture points this out explicitly when it speaks of "eyes full of adultery" in 2 Petr. 2:14 and Rom. 3:13-15 catalogs the members of the body as it were and says: "Their throat (λάρυγξ, throat) is an open sepulchre, with their tongues they act deceitfully, the poison of asps is under their lips. Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are hastening to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways." And when in this passage v. 17-18 is added: "The way of peace they know not; there is no fear of God before their eyes," the sinful activity is thereby led back by means of the members of the body from the primary seat of original sinful corruption, namely from the soul, and that from the soul according to understanding and will, thus according to the highest powers of the soul. If papists etc. and also newer theologians transfer the actual seat of sin to the lower forces ("sensuality", *appetitus sensitivus*), this happens in contradiction with the Scriptures. The Formula of Concord confesses the scriptural truth when it says,¹⁶¹¹) "that we all inherit by nature such a heart, mind and thought from Adam, which, according to its highest powers and light of reason, is naturally straight against God and his highest commandments, and is even an enmity against God, which especially concerns divine, spiritual things".

1610) [Comp., ed. Walther II, 295](#). 1611) M. 576, 11. [[Trigl. 863, 11](#)]



5. The consequences of the original sin. [^]

Original sinful death includes being dead in sins (Eph. 2:1, 5) or being estranged from the life that is of God (Eph. 4:16), thus spiritual death. But if the spiritual death is not lifted by faith in Christ, the Redeemer of sins, then eternal death or eternal damnation follows from the bodily death. This has already been explained in more detail above. A few more details may be added. As far as the bodily death is concerned, it has been discussed from the church fathers on until our time whether the words Gen. 2:17: "Which day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die of death" refer to a certain event that will occur later, or whether we should think of a death that occurred immediately with the sin. The latter would be preferable. The time determination "on which day" binds the dying very closely with the act of sinning. The complete separation of soul and body, which occurred only later, was only the conclusion of the dissolution process beginning with the sin. Thus, even now all men, because they are Adam's children and therefore sinners, die from youth. The weaknesses and diseases to which we are subjected in this life are, as it were, only loosening of the bond between soul and body and preliminary stages of the complete separation that will follow sooner or later.¹⁶¹²⁾ — By far more important is the question why actually eating from the forbidden tree brought death to Adam and Eve. Recent theologians, among them also Delitzsch and Hofmann, have expressed the opinion that death was not actually caused by the transgression of the divine commandment, Gen. 2:17, but rather by the fact that the devil had taken possession of the forbidden tree. As a result, eating from the tree had such an evil effect on "the bodily nature" of Adam and Eve that their sensual desire was directed toward an "object of the corporeal world." Underlying this strange assertion is the interest in giving the first sin the character of ἀνομία, of going directly against

 1612) Thus Gerhard says, *Loci, L. De Morte, § 17: Quia venenum illud peccati nos ipsorum (of the first parents) posterius in corpore perpetuo in hac vita circumferimus, ideo etiam mortem nostram in nobis ipsis semper circumferimus, nec repente in mortem incidimus, sed minutatim procedimus.* [[Google](#)]

the Word of God.¹⁶¹³) But this view contradicts the biblical account. It turns the hindmost first. The devil begins the temptation not by drawing Eve's attention to the edibility and beauty of the fruit of the tree, but by first seeking to raise doubts about God's Word. He gives Eve to consider whether God really gave such a strange commandment. Eve proves well-informed both as to the commandment itself and as to the punishment that God had placed on the transgression of the commandment. She replies, "God has said, 'Do not eat of it, nor touch it, lest you die!'" But when the tempter perceives that Eve does not indignantly turn away from him, but that doubts about the truth of the divine Word are stirring in her, he dares to directly contradict the Word of God by asserting that eating from the forbidden tree will not result in death, but in a great advance in knowledge. To this argument against the Word of God Eve agreed, and now she looked at "that of the tree it was good to eat of, and [it was] lovely to look upon, that it was a pleasure (טֶמֶר [HEBREW], desirable) tree, because it made wise, and took of the fruit, and ate, and gave her husband also of it, and he did eat." Thus the first sin occurred, and thus it stands established that the first sin also had the character of the ἀνομία, that is, of the transgression of the divine νόμος clearly recognized but set aside. Therefore, we must say that the fruit of the forbidden tree did not kill because it was bad or evil in itself, but because the eating of this tree was

1613) Delitzsch on the passage in the Genesis Commentary. The quotation printed in [Baier-Walther II, 305](#) is taken from the first edition. In the third edition available to us, however, the earlier explanation is essentially retained; on Hofmann, cf. his [Schriftbeweis 2 I, 465 ff.](#) Hofmann also agrees with Delitzsch that the fruit of the tree was evil in itself, p. 477: "The fruit directly affected a corruption of the body, insofar as it serves reproduction, by virtue of a property inherent in itself." Above all, Hofmann is concerned that death be understood not as a consequence of God's wrath on sin, but as an "evil" which befalls it through the eating of the fruit." He therefore also wants to translate לֵטִב וָרָע [HEBREW] "good and bad," not "good and evil." Rightly says [Kliefoth](#) against Hofmann: "Where sin does not begin with enmity against God, neither does redemption begin with reconciliation." ([Der Schriftbeweis des D. v. Hofmann. Schwerin 1859, p. 287.](#)) As is well known, Hofmann also denied the *satisfactio vicaria* Christi.

was forbidden by God. Luther deals with this point in his commentary on Genesis in detail, the summa of which is summarized in the words:¹⁶¹⁴⁾ "Adam sets his teeth in this apple, but in truth he sets his teeth in a thorn, which was God's prohibition and disobedience against God. This is the true and proper cause of this woe, that he sinned against God, and despised his commandment, and followed the devil. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was indeed a good tree, which bore the most noble fruit; but because the prohibition is added to it, and man does not obey it, it becomes a tree much more harmful than all poison. ... Arbor scisntias doni et mali occiäüt virtute verbi prohibentis." — The way by which it came to the first sin has its analogy in the way in our time in the theological world it is denied that God's Word, the Holy Scriptures, is God's Word. The sequence of thoughts can be presented in this way: Should the Scriptures, which speak to us so humanly and in human language, really be the Word of God? This was accepted by the first church, also by the church of the Reformation, and especially by the dogmatists. This is also excusable to a certain extent, because at that time the sense for "reality" was still undeveloped. But since, as a result of the progress in all fields of science, the "developed sense of reality" is the special gift of our time, it is absolutely impossible, even now, to "identify" Scripture and the Word of God. Hereupon the decisive judgment sets in: Scripture is not the Word of God! Therefore, modern theology considers the escape from Scripture into the "pious self-consciousness of the theologizing subject" as inevitable. Conclusion: "All theologians who do theology in this way have actually become like God, yes, above God, because they know even with respect to God's Word what is good in it and what is evil in it. An analogy with the first deception of the devil cannot be mistaken here. — In connection with the fall of man, which took place by eating from the forbidden tree, the question has been raised before and now why the *lex paradisiaca* (the commandment given to man in paradise) had a seemingly so unimportant, indeed, quite arbitrary content. Would it not have been more appropriate if the

1614) St. L. 1, 117 f. *Opp. ex., Erl. I*, 120 sq.

"Paradise law" would have referred to the whole Decalogue? Many a Christian has had the same thoughts while reading the story of the Fall. *Quaeso te*, writes [Brenz](#),¹⁶¹⁵⁾ *quid hoc sibi velit, quod Deus prohibeat esum de fructu arboris et non potius aliud genus peccati? ... Cur non potius recitat Adamo decalogum, quem postea Israelitis in deserto Sinai recitavit?* [[Google](#)] Brenz answers two things: 1. The decalogue as a natural law was already written into the hearts of Adam and Eve by creation and therefore did not need any special announcement. 2. Therefore, it pleased God to give Adam and Eve a commandment for the practice and probation of their obedience, the contents of which did not already stand written in their hearts. Luther especially emphasizes this point. Whether we take and keep the right position towards God that is due to us as men, becomes decisively apparent in the fact that we submit to His Word of God from the bottom of our hearts even in the case when we do not understand why God speaks, commands and does just this way and not another. [Luther](#) says: "After all things were given to Adam that he might use them of his liking either for need or for pleasure, God finally demands (*tandem*) of him that he should show reverence and obedience at this tree of the knowledge of good and evil and thus have, as it were, an exercise of the service of God." At this point, Luther continues, the matter becomes "theological," whereas in the preceding it was a matter of things belonging to nature or to the domestic and world government. The theologians in particular should take note of this. This is the desperately wicked pest of modern theology, that instead of drawing Christian doctrine from Scripture alone and standardizing it by it, it wants to grasp it "cognitively," as a popular *terminus technicus* goes, and accept or reject it according to the findings. Against this pestilence—the expression is not too harsh—even those who, by God's grace, mean the Word with all seriousness have to defend themselves throughout life: εἴ τις λαλεῖ ὡς λόγια θεοῦ ["If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God"] (1 Pet. 4:11). That pestilence is also among the consequences of the hereditary corruption which clings to us through the whole life on earth; for among the characteristics of hereditary corruption is not merely *propagabilitas a parentibus ad liberos*, but

1615) Quoted in [L. u. W. 24, 193 f.](#)

also the [*tenacitas seu pertinax inhaerentia per omnem vitam*](#) as the dogmatists speak.¹⁶¹⁶⁾

Furthermore, the loss of free will in spiritual matters is one of the consequences of original sin. Actually, this is not a new subject at all. All that can be said in the matter is already contained in the fact that the Scriptures say of every natural man spiritual death (νεκρός- τοῖς παραπτώμασιν). A special treatise was and is prompted by the fact that the expression "free will" is ambiguous and this ambiguity is misused to deny the "dead-in-sins". Where there is ambiguity of a word (homonymy), the rule generally accepted as correct is to be followed: *Bene docet, qui bene distinguit*. ["He teaches well who distinguishes well."] In following this rule it is to be said:

a. If we understand free will (*liberum arbitrium*) as the fact that man, in contrast to creatures without reason, has a will at all and wants something, then it must be stated that man still has free will even after the Fall. Although fallen man is dead in sins and cannot do anything but sin, *non potest non peccare*,¹⁶¹⁷⁾ so he still sins willingly and gladly, because the will to sin is innate in him.¹⁶¹⁸⁾ We also call this freedom of the will the *libertas a coactione* or formal freedom. It is contrary to the nature of the will to be forced. Therefore, Gerhard correctly says,¹⁶¹⁹⁾ that freedom of the will, conceived as freedom from coercion, and bondage in sin, so that man cannot do otherwise than sin, are very much in accord with each other. *Consistit arbitrii libertas in homine cum peccati servitute; nam et peccat et non potest non peccare, et tamen libere peccat ac peccare ipsum delectat; quamvis nonnisi ad malum feratur, id tamen libere, id est, ultro et sponte, non invitus aut coactus, eligit totoque impetu ad illud fertur* [[Google](#)].¹⁶²⁰⁾

1616) [Baier-Walther II, 305 sq.](#)

1617) Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 2:13; Rom. 6:13. — Rom. 8:7.

1618) Jn. 3:6: ἀπὸς by birth, the nature of this Rom. 8:7: το φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς ἐχθρὰ εἰς θεόν. Likewise Gen. 8:21: יֵצֵר לֵב הָאָדָם רָע מִנְּעֻרָיו [HEBREW].

1619) *Loci, L. De Libero Arbitrio*, § 29.

1620) The *toto impetu*, with all its force, is exemplified by the great willingness with which the Unitarians, Lodges, Communists, a part of the

b. If we understand by free will the ability to want what is spiritually good, that is, to believe the gospel of Christ and to fulfill God's Law out of love for God, then after the fall man has no free will, because he cannot recognize the gospel as truth, but considers it foolishness.¹⁶²¹⁾ Nor can he be subject to the Law of God, but is heartily hostile to the same (εχθ'ρα εἰς Θεόν).¹⁶²²⁾ It is only a question of free will in this sense when we say that man has no free will after the fall and before his rebirth, and in particular that he cannot choose the gospel, but can only reject it. Therefore, so that the *status controversiae* is not shifted, it is important to keep in mind that it is not a matter of willing per se, but of the object of willing.¹⁶²³⁾

c. Besides, it is to be noted that the fallen man still has to some extent the ability to perform an external or civil righteousness (*iustitia carnalis, operum, carnis*). The "to some extent" (*aliquo modo*) must be added, because this civil righteousness also stands on very weak feet. The innate evil nature and the inducement of the devil, in whose realm all non-Christians are,¹⁶²⁴⁾ prove to be so overpowering that all natural righteousness, education, culture and other supports of civil righteousness prove to be cobwebs with regard to their restricting power. The Apology in the article *De Libero Arbitrio* says:¹⁶²⁵⁾ *Habet humana voluntas libertatem in operibus et rebus deligendis, quas ratio per se comprehendit. Potest aliquo modo efficere iustitiam civilem seu*

Socialists, etc., reject the Christian religion, Rome curses the Christian doctrine of justification in the Council of Trent, modern Lutherans fight the Scriptures as the Word of God and the *satisfactio vicaria*.

1621) 1 Cor. 2:14; 1:23.

1622) Rom. 8:7.

1623) Gerhard, *Loci, L. De Libero Arbitrio*, § 32: *Tota quaestio est de libertate ratione obiecti, circa quod voluntas occupata est*. Against Bellarmine's malicious displacement of the *status controversiae*, Gerhard writes l. c. § 8: *Apagē igitur tragicas accusationes ecclesiis nostris a Bellarmino in praefatione librorum de libero arbitrio intentatas, quasi arbitrii libertatem tollamus, ipsam naturam violamus et nos ipsos non solum beluarum similes, sed omnino beluas rationis expertes profiteamur!* [[Google](#)]

1624) Eph. 2:2; Col. 1:13; Acts 26:18.

1625) M. 218, 70, 71.

[[Trigl. 335, 70 f.](#) 

*iustitiam operum, potest loqui de Deo, exhibere Deo certum cultum externo opere, obedire magistratibus, parentibus, in opere externo eligendo potest continere manus a caede, ab adulterio, a furto. Quum reliqua sit in natura hominis ratio et iudicium de rebus sensui subiectis, reliquus est etiam delectus earum rerum et libertas et facultas efficiendae iustitiae civilis. Id enim vocat Scriptura iustitiam carnis, quam natura carnalis, hoc est, ratio, per se efficit sine Spiritu Sancto. Quamquam tanta est vis concupiscentiae, ut malis affectibus saepius obtemperent homines quam recto iudicio. Et diabolus, qui est efficax in impiis, ut ait Paulus Eph. 2:2, non desinit incitare hanc imbecillem naturam ad varia delicta. Haec causae sunt, quare et civilis iustitia rara sit inter homines, sicut videmus ne ipsos quidem philosophos eam consecutos esse, qui videntur eam expetivisse. — A handsome series of bogus reasons was and is put forward for the free will of the natural man in spiritual matters. These arguments are registered, treated and refuted in the Doctrine of Conversion, [Vol. II, 664 ff.](#) They are as follows: 1. Faith in Christ or conversion and keeping the commandments of God are required of man. 2. Without human cooperation, *facultas se applicandi ad gratiam*, etc., conversion would be a compulsion. God works only the power to believe in Christ, not the act of faith. 4. Without human participation, the subject of faith would not be man, but the Holy Spirit. 5. Since the reason for non-conversion lies in man, the decisive reason for conversion must, "according to irrefutable logic," lie in man himself. 6. Conversion must be understood as a "moral" process. 7. *homo libere se convertit*; "faith is "free obedience". 8. *iustitia civilis*, education, culture, science, etc., also play a role in the conversion of man. 9. Natural man still has the power to use the means of grace, to go to church, to listen attentively, etc.. At the same time, dogma-historical material is also given there. The refutation of the bogus reasons is followed by the highlighting of the actual reasons that are decisive for the assertion of free will in spiritual matters. These are the self-righteousness and self-wisdom flowing from hereditary corruption. This is explained in detail in*

[vol. II, 580-591](#). Here, too, dogma-historical material is appended.¹⁶²⁶⁾

d. The consequences of the original sin are also the individual sinful actions or actual sins (*peccata actualia*). The Scriptures trace the individual sinful acts back to the inherent evil state in a very certain way. Thus, Ps. 51 the actual sin of adultery (v. 2) is traced back to its evil source (v. 7: "Behold, I am begotten of sinful seed, and my mother conceived me in sins"). According to John 3:6, all men are σάρξ by their natural birth. But according to Gal. 5:19-21, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, fornication, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, envy, wrath, strife, dissension, rabble, hatred, murder, whoring, devouring, and the like are ἐργα τῆς σαρκός, works, that is, activities, of inherent corruption. Thus we leave here the section on the sins of fact (*peccata actualia*).

1626) On the subject of free will, we should read above all Erasmus' *De Libero Arbitrio Διατριβή* of 1524 and Luther's *De Servo Arbitrio* of 1525. Erasmus' writing is printed in German translation in the Louis edition of Luther's works, XVIII, 1600 ff. The translation is made after a Strasbourg printing, October 1524. Luther's counter-writing, *De Servo Arbitrio*, is found in German translation [St. L. XVIII, 1668 ff](#), made after the Erlangen edition, Opp. v. a. VII, 113 sqq. Whoever has become acquainted with Erasmus' arguments in favor of free will in spiritual matters and holds up next to them the arguments with which in recent and most recent times the Lutheran doctrine of Conversion and Election of Grace has been combated as Calvinistic, will not be able to avoid stating a complete consensus, about the almost general failure to understand Luther's *De Servo Arbitrio* cf. vol. II under the section "Terminology in Relation to God's Will of Grace," [pp. 45 ff](#), also [pp. 594 ff](#). Cf. [Baier-Walther II, 300](#) ff. the antithesis in Quenstedt (Pelagians, Semipelagians, Scholastics, Papists, Arminians, Lutheran Synergists in the 16th and 17th centuries) and the supplement from the writings of modern Lutherans. The old Lutheran theologians mostly have longer treatises *de libero arbitrio*. Chemnitz, *Loci*, 1623 I, 174 ff; *Examen Conc. Trid.* ed. 1667, p. 113 ff. Gerhard, *Loci*, Berl. II, 238 ff. Quenstedt, *Syst. ed.* 1715 I, 1076 ff. Hollaz, *Exam.*, Krakevitz 1722 I, 615 ff. — Geschichtliches Über den Kampf Luthers gegen Erasmus, [Einl. zu Bd. XVIII der St. L. Lutherausg., 47 ff](#). F. Bente, "The Synergistic Controversy", *Historical Introductions to the Symbolical Books: Triglotta I*, 124 sqq. [see [BookOfConcord here](#)].

Actual sins. [^]

1. Name and concept of actual sins. [^]

We call actual sin (*peccatum actuale*) up to *ανομία*, which is done or worked by man, in contrast to the *ανομία*, which, because it is innate in man, is not done, but exists before all doing, namely as *imputatio peccati Adamitici* and *als corruptio hereditaria, quae in omnes homines per carnalem generationem derivatur*. Luther says about the difference between original sin and actual sin:¹⁶²⁷⁾ "The original sin or natural sin or personal sin is the right main sin. Where this would not be, there would be no real sin. This sin is not done like all other sins; for it is, it lives and does all sin."

If we ask what comes under the term "actual sin," we must not forget that actual sins are not only those that are committed *agendo*, that is, by doing what is forbidden, but also those that are committed *non agendo, omittendo*, by not doing what is commanded. Or even more briefly, *peccatum actuale* is every action and cessation that is *ανομία*, that is, stands in contradiction with the will of God. In Scripture, sins of omission are especially emphasized because their sinful character is easily concealed. Therefore, Christ calls Matt. 25:30 calls the servant who buried his hundredweight in the ground a useless servant (*ἄχρητον δούλον*) and pronounces on him the sentence: "Cast him out into the outer darkness, there will be his weeping and gnashing of teeth." To some readers of the Bible, this judgment may have seemed harsh at first glance. But how badly that servant had sinned *non agendo* becomes clear when we realize that God gives all gifts, spiritual and corporal, small and great, not in vain, that is, for disuse, but for actual use in his service.

 1627) [St. L. XI, 287](#). Luther uses original sin, natural sin, person sin, principal sin as synonyms. This sin is called original sin, insofar as it comes to us and in us from the first sin of Adam through the fleshly birth; natural sin, insofar as it adheres to the corrupted human nature; person sin, insofar as it is everywhere where there is a human person, also in the children in the womb (V, 752); principal sin, insofar as it is the evil source of all other sins.

He who lacks this service is an unfaithful steward. Not to be ignored is the further powerful word Luke 12:48: "To whom much is given, from him much will be sought; and to whom much is given, from him much will be required." We see from this that peccatum actuale omissionis is also present when the measure of the service does not correspond to the measure of the gifts. In exposing and punishing *peccata omissionis*, however, we must be careful not to become "cane masters" (law enforcers), but rather, as befits a Christian teacher, we should entice and rebuke with demonstrated divine mercy in Christ (Rom. 12:1), so that the doing of God's will becomes a pleasure or, as Luther used to put it, that Christians "walk as in a paradise" in the works of their Christian calling ("Make duty a pleasure").¹⁶²⁸⁾ It goes without saying and has already been mentioned that all evil thoughts and all evil movements of the will with regard to doctrine and life belong to the actual sin.¹⁶²⁹⁾ In the doctrines of sanctification, reference is made to the *Initiis obsta*.¹⁶³⁰⁾

2. The causes of Actual sins. ^

Based on the Scriptures, we can speak of causes located within and outside of man.

Causae Peccati Actualis intra Hominem. ^

Cause is the corrupt nature or hereditary corruption. Rom. 7:17: ἡ ἰνοικονσα ἁμαρτία does (κατεργάζεται) sin. Specifically, the Scripture calls a. the ignorance rooted in the inherited corruption,

1628) This is treated in more detail in the doctrine of sanctification and good works under the sections "The Quality and Quantity of the Good Works of Christians," Vol. III, pp. 56 ff.

1629) Matt. 15:19: διαλογισμοί πονηροί, Eph. 2:3: αἱ ἐπιθυμίαι τῆς σαρκός. Chemnitz, *Loci* I, 255: *Matt. 5 Christus longa concione ostendit, legem arguere non tantum actualia peccata, sed et originale, et actualia esse non tantum externas actiones, verum etiam interiores affectus pugnantes cum lege Dei. Et Paulus tribuit unam communem appellationem interioribus et exterioribus actionibus vitiosis. Gal. 5:19-21 inter opera carnis numerat non tantum fornicationem, ebrietatem, verum etiam haereses, idololatram, iram* etc. [[Google](#)]

1630) Vol. III, 19.

as in Paul, 1 Tim. 1:13: ἀγνοῶν ἐποίησα ἐν ἀπιστίᾳ, by which, however, sin neither wholly nor partly loses the character of sin; for Paul adds v. 15: πρῶτος εἰμι ἐγώ, namely τῶν ἀμαρτωλῶν. To ignorance as the cause of actual sin Christ also points, Luke 23:34: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"; likewise Peter, Acts 3:17: "I know that ye have done it through ignorance, as also your rulers." Causes of sins of deed are also b. violent movements of emotions and passions (*affectus, passionēs, παθήματα*), such as fear, angry upsurge, natural love, etc. Examples: Peter out of the sea (Matt. 14:30), in the palace of the high priest (Mark 14:66 ff.), in Antioch (Gal. 2:12). That even the *affectus* and *passiones* do not take away the character of sin from the action, we see from Luke 22:62: "Peter went out and wept bitterly." Cause of the actual sins also becomes c. the relevant evil habits, which is produced by the individual repeating sinful acts. The dogmatists, on the basis of Scripture, speak of an *inclinatio inclinatio ad malum acquisita, ei nem peccatum habituale acquisitum, etnem habitus vitiosus acquisitus*, Jer. 13:23: "You cannot do good because you are accustomed to evil." There is a habitualness in sin as there is a habitualness in righteousness.

Causae Peccati Actualis extra Hominem. ^

The scripture names a. the devil and thus opens the right insight into the realm of sin for us. The Scripture teaches an activity of the devil not only in unbelievers (Eph. 2:2; 1 Cor. 10:20), but also in the sins of the children of God, as in the census of David (1 Chron. 22:1) and in the denial of Peter (Luke 22:31) and even before that, when Peter wanted to keep Christ from suffering in Jerusalem (Matt. 16:23). The causal relationship of the devil to the sins of the children of God is also shown to us by the temptation of Christ, although in this case the diabolic *causa* remained without effect. — The question has been raised whether the influence of the devil is merely moral or also physical. The latter is not to be denied absolutely. Matt. 4:5: the devil ἐστηαεν αὐτόν ἐπὶ τὸ πτερύγων τὸν ἱερόν. b. Other men become the cause of actual sins of deed by seducing to actual sins by word

(false doctrine.¹⁶³¹) ungodly and immoral addresses, hymns and writings¹⁶³²) or by deed (ungodly walk, lewd gestures, lewd images, especially nudities¹⁶³³) or both seduce to deed sins.

That God, as a result of his omnipotence, does not become guilty of the sins that actually occur, was explained in the doctrine of divine providence.¹⁶³⁴) That evil in the sense of suffering comes from God, because God governs all events, is a clear doctrine of Scripture,¹⁶³⁶) to be held against Manichaeism and extremely comforting for the children of God. When tribulation comes, they do not need to negotiate with the devil, who knows no mercy, but they turn in repentance and faith to the one true God, who has everything in his hand and is a gracious God and Father to them for the sake of Christ. Luther: *Sic Deus est bonus, iustus et misericors, etiam cum percutit. Qui hoc non credit, is discedit ab unitate fidei, quod sit unus Deus, et fingit sibi alium Deum, qui sui sit dissimilis, iam bonus, iam malus.* But Luther adds: *Sed donum insigne Spiritus Sancti est, credere Deum, cum mala immittit, esse propitium et misericordem* [[Google](#)].¹⁶³⁶)

3. The scriptural doctrine of offence. [^](#)

The seduction to sin is also called "giving offence" σκάνδαλον ποιεῖν, Rom. 16:17. We can define: "To give offence is to teach or do something by which we give occasion to other men to unbelief, false faith, or ungodly living, and, as much as is in us, to corrupt them eternally.

1631) Rom. 16:17-18: Those who do not abide by the apostolic doctrine, εξαπατῶσιν τὰς καρδίας τῶν ἀκάκων, of the guileless. — 2 Tim. 2:17: Their word (the denial of the bodily resurrection) ὡς γὰρ γραῖνα νομὴν ἐξει.

1632) 1 Cor. 15:33: φθειροῦσιν ἡθὴ χρησθ' ὁμυλίας κακαί. It is truly a pity that the writings of the most popular writers are for the most part godless and immoral in content. Thus, as we saw, already Cicero laments the evil influence of the poets on popular morality, *Tuscul.* III, 2, 3.

1633) 2 Sam. 11:2. After the Fall, clothing is a divine order, Gen. 3:21.

1634) p. 595 ff.: "The Divine Providence and Sin" and "The Divine Admission of Sin"; on "hardening" see [vol. II, 32 f.](#)

1635) Is. 45:7: "Who giveth peace, and abolisheth evil. I am the Lord who does all these things."

1636) On Ps. 51:8. *opp. ex.*, Erl. XIX, 106. [St. L. V, 570.](#)

Hence the powerful warnings of Scripture against giving offense.¹⁶³⁷⁾ Scripture also teaches that we can give offence not only by doing evil (false doctrine and ungodly living), but also by careless use of permissible things (e.g., eating meat and drinking wine, Rom. 14), causing Christians weak in knowledge by our example to do what they in their erring consciences think is sin. By doing so we would endanger their faith; for (v. 20): "All things indeed are pure, but it is not good for him that eateth it with a stumbling of his conscience"; v. 23: "He that doubteth thereon, and eateth, is condemned" (κατακέκριται); v. 15: "Corrupt not him (ἀπόλλυε) with thy meat, for whose sake Christ died." We note: The apostle gives Rom. 14 theological right to those who do not make conscience in regard to food, drink, and days, v. 14, 22. But this right theological knowledge is limited in practical application by love, namely, when by the use of right knowledge the brethren who are still weak in knowledge could be induced to act against his erring conscience. As a general rule, therefore, we must hold: The use of Christian liberty is to be renounced except where the truth of the gospel would be denied. The latter is the case when one who is weak in knowledge wants to have his error recognized as right doctrine, which he reveals by judging the one who has right knowledge, that is, by declaring him to be one who acts contrary to God's command. In this case the weak man becomes a false teacher, and then Col. 2:16: Μὴ τις ὑμᾶς κρινέτω ἐν βρώσει etc., and Gal. 5:1: "Stand therefore in liberty, that Christ may set you free!" It may happen that in the due use of Christian liberty weak persons may be vexed, that is, induced to act contrary to their conscience; but then those are responsible for the offence who by their κρίνειν have compelled us to make use of our liberty.¹⁶³⁸⁾

1637) Matt. 18:6 ff; Mark. 9:42 ff; Luke 17:1-2 etc.

1638) According to this we understand the different actions of the apostle Paul. According to Acts 16:3 he allows Timothy to be circumcised, but according to Gal. 2:4. 5 he refuses to have Titus circumcised. Acts 16 he takes into account the weakness of those who were not yet sufficiently instructed; in Gal. 2 it was

The offence given is to be distinguished from the offence taken. By offence taken we understand an occasion to sin, which one takes from the words or actions of another without his fault, because he himself is spiritually blind and evil. The Scriptures deal abundantly with the offence taken. Christ crucified becomes the λίθος προσκόμματος και πέτρα σκανδάλου προσκόμματος πέτρα¹⁶³⁹⁾ to the wisdom-asking heathen,¹⁶⁴⁰⁾ in that both assert and establish their perverse opinion of the way to salvation contrary to Christ's way of leading men to salvation. This offence against Christ and His Church continues until the Last Day.¹⁶⁴¹⁾ Christians will then be angry with Christ when they fall away from him because they do not want to go the way of suffering here on earth. "Then shall many be vexed."¹⁶⁴²⁾ Hence Christ's word: "Blessed is he who does not take offense at me."¹⁶⁴³⁾

4. The scriptural doctrine of temptation. ^

There is a temptation a. to evil, b. to good. The temptation to evil comes from the devil, from other men and from our corrupt nature and has the seduction to sin as its purpose (*tentatio seductionis*). The temptation to good comes from God and has as its purpose the testing and strengthening of faith (*tentatio probationis*). Examples for the *tentatio seductionis*: Matt. 4:1 ff (the devil tempts, πειράζει, Christ); Jas. 1:14 (Christians are tempted by their evil flesh, έκαστος πειράζεται υπό τής ιδίας επιθυμίας). Examples

necessary to confess the truth of the gospel against κρίνοντες. Likewise Peter Gal. 2 was *in statu confessionis*. Paul therefore rebukes it as a denial of the truth of the gospel in the walk, that Peter at Antioch would no more eat with the Gentile Christians than those of the circumcision entered. Cf. the quotations in [Baier-Walther II, 313 sqq.](#)

1639) Rom. 9:30-33. 1640) 1 Cor. 1:22-23.

1641) The modern theologians are annoyed with Christ because he expects them to abandon their ego standpoint, to stick to His Word and to consider the Scripture as God's infallible word, Jn. 8:31-32; 17:20; 10:35; Eph. 2:20; 1 Tim. 6:3 ff. Likewise, *satisfactio vicaria* is a stumbling block to them. Therefore, before conversion, they also vindicate the [facultas se applicandi ad gratiam](#) in its various forms: self-determination, self-establishment, self-decision, freedom of choice [in utramque partem](#), etc.

1642) Matt. 24:10; 13:21.

1643) Matt. 11:6. 25-26.

for the *tentatio probationis*: Gen. 22:1-18 (God tries Abraham by commanding him to sacrifice Isaac); 6 Gen. 13:1 ff. (God lets false prophets come with signs and wonders to try the people whether they stick to the Word of God). In the New Testament, too, God causes rabbles (αἰρέσεις) to come, not so that Christians will fall away, but ἵνα οἱ δοκιμοὶ φανεροὶ γένωνται, and 1 Cor. 8:8 Paul tries (δοκιμάζων) the love of the Corinthians, whether it is of a right kind. The human criticism of *tentatio probationis* (that God thereby becomes *causa peccati*) is a *crimen laesae maiestatis divinae*. To make matters worse, Scripture reveals to us the fact that God does not let anyone be tempted above ability (ὐπὲρ δὲ δύναοῦε) [1 Cor. 10:13], but ποιήσει ἅνθρωπον πειρασμῷ καὶ τὴν ἐκβασιν. Scriptural axiom: He who falls in temptation falls through his own fault, namely, through self-reliance, that is, through apostasy from grace,¹⁶⁴⁴⁾ he who passes temptation does not pass through his own merit and strength, but through God's grace alone.¹⁶⁴⁵⁾

5. Classifications and various namings of the sins of commission.

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The manifold divisions of the *peccata actualia*, if they have ground in Scripture, are not to be considered useless or "boring." Rather, as Chemnitz points out, they serve to ward off¹⁶⁴⁶⁾ carnal security, in that Christians see how many wild beasts slumber in their own flesh and are to be fought by them. *Unusquisque igitur verorum Christianorum una cum Paulo, 1 Cor. 9:27, proprium suum corpus contundat et in servitutum redigat, ne reprobis fiat.* [[Google](#)] We will therefore diligently ask God, *ut sancti sui Spiritus gratia nobis adesse et largiri dignetur, ut peccata nostra vere agnoscamus, serio deploremus, eorumque remissionem in unico Servatoris nostri Iesu Christi merito firma fide quaeramus sicque in ipso aeternam beatitudinem consequamur. Amen.* [[Google](#)]

1644) Peter, Matt. 26:33-36. All Christians are told, 1 Cor. 10:12: δὲ δοκῶν ἐστάναι, βλέπew μη πέση.

1645) This is what Paul inculcates in Rom. 11:20-22 to the standing heathen insofar as they showed inclination to rise above the fallen Jews. Therefore 2 Cor. 12:9: ἡ δύναμις θεοῦ ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελειοῦται. This is as much as, "In temptation the strong are weak and the weak are strong."

1646) *Loci* I, 269.

a. Distinguishing the actual sins according to the different involvement of the human will. [^]

In every sin, the will of man is involved, even if unconsciously. In this respect, all sins could be called willing sins. However, the will can be involved in the sins in different degrees. The will can come to the fore in such a way that the man undertakes the sin, albeit with some self-excuses, and carries it out with deliberation. Examples: Judas' betrayal (Matt. 26:14-16), Absalom's rebellion (2 Sam. 16). In this sense we speak of *peccata voluntaria, proaeretica, malitiae*. However, the will can also recede in such a way that ignorance, passion, such as fear, natural love, party spirit, etc., causes sin. Examples: The two hundred men from Jerusalem went with Absalom in ignorance about the evil thing (2 Sam. 15:11); Peter denied Christ and his fellow believers from the heathen because of fear (Luke 22:55ff.; Gal. 2:12ff.). In this sense we speak of *peccata involuntaria, ignorantiae, praecipitantiae*. The name "sins of weakness" (*peccata infirmitatis*) should be limited to the faithful, because the unbelievers are not only weak, but dead in sins and completely in the power of the devil (Eph. 2:1 ff.). Among the believers' sins of weakness are especially the evil thoughts and desires that suddenly rise from the σαρξ against their will (*motus inordinati subitanei*). Luther:¹⁶⁴⁷⁾ "If you have evil thoughts, do not despair; only see that you do not let them take you captive. ... When faith is there, a hundred evil thoughts come, a hundred temptations more than before. Only see to it that thou be a man, and not be taken captive, and always rebel, saying, I will not, I will not." — Regarding the sins of the infants, the following should be noted: We ask in the baptismal form,¹⁶⁴⁸⁾ that through baptism "... that there may be drowned and destroyed in him all that he hath inherited from Adam and himself added thereto." In the case of very small children we do not find *peccata proaeretica* (Deut. 1:39; Jonah 4:11), but *peccata actualia*. As faith and works of faith are found in very small children through the action of the Holy Spirit (Ps. 8:3), so

1647) [St. L. IX, 1032](#). 1648) St. L. *Agende* 1876, p. 4.

we must also not deny that in them, because they are born of the flesh (John 3:6), there are also inner movements of the flesh, even if they are not conscious of them. Of course, all those who contrary to Scripture count *voluntarium* or conscious self-determination as the essence of sin deny the *peccata actualia* in children.

b. The *peccata actualia* in relation to conscience. [^]

The old division of the actual sins into *peccata contra conscientiam* a. *veram*, b. *erroneam*, c. *probabilem*, d. *dubiam* looks mechanical at first glance, but corresponds to the practical need. He who acts against *conscientiam rectam*, that is, against his rightly reported conscience, sins most grievously. He acts as an *αυτοκατάκριτος* (Tit. 3:10) and approaches the state where erring will enter and there is danger of committing the sin against the Holy Spirit.¹⁶⁴⁹⁾ He who has an erring conscience (*conscientiam erroneam*), who, for example, thinks he must call upon the saints, is in the evil position of sinning both in the case of not acting and in the case of acting. If he acts according to his erring conscience, he sins because he does something that God has forbidden. If he does not act according to his conscience, he also sins because he refrains from doing what he nevertheless considers commanded by God in his captive conscience.¹⁶⁵⁰⁾ That is why it is of such great importance to remove erring consciences by teaching them from God's Word. — To the somewhat strange expression "sins against the probable conscience" (*conscientia probabilis* or also *opinativa*, a better translation is probably "probable conscience") Hollaz adds by way of explanation:¹⁶⁵¹⁾ *Contra conscientiam probabilem peccat, qui viam tutiorem negligit*. One may not think the expression *conscientia probabilis* beautiful, but the thing it is meant to denote is correct and important. We do not act conscientiously, but recklessly, that is, sinfully, if we do not take the trouble to think about

1649) Cf. on the danger in doctrinal disputes above, p. 101; also p. 423 f. in the section "The Use of Scripture to Decide Doctrinal Disputes".

1650) Cf. [Baier-Walther II, 269](#): *Conscientia erronea, . . . non obligat, sed ligat. ... Ligare vero est aliquem constringere, ut quis non licite possit procedere tali conscientia permanente, ita ut peccetur, si contra eam agatur, et peccetur etiam, si iuxta eius praescriptum agatur.* [[Google](#)] (Quoted from Ad. Oslanders *Colleg. Theol.-system.*, P. V, Loc. 14, p. 288 sq.).

1651) *Examen*, P.. II, cap. IV, *De peccatis actualibus*, qu. II.

which of several possible or suggested ways of acting is the best and safest. This is applied both in the natural and in the ecclesiastical sphere. Christians are so concerned to do the best in the things that are left to their consideration and election that they call upon God in prayer to let them know and choose what is the safest and best. — As for the doubting conscience (*conscientia dubia*), Christians clearly see from Romans 14 that they must abstain from action when their conscience is doubtful.¹⁶⁵²⁾

c. Classification of sins according to the object. [^]

Seen on the object, the scripture mentions sins against God, against the neighbor, against ourselves. Examples: Gen. 39:9: "How then should I do such a great evil and sin against God"; Deut. 19:17: "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart, but thou shalt rebuke thy neighbor, lest for his sake thou bear guilt"; 1 Cor. 6:18: "Ο πορνεῶν sins against his own body." But it is not to be forgotten that even sins against one's neighbor and against oneself are sin only because they are at the same time directed against God, namely, they go against God's commandment. Thus the general rule remains in force: *Omne peccatum in Deum committitur*. ["Every sin is committed against God."] This is expressed in Ps. 51:6 [or 51:4]: "Against you alone (עָלֶיךָ [HEBREW]) have I sinned." David does not mean to deny his sin against Uriah and Bathsheba, but to put their greatness in the light.¹⁶⁵³⁾

d. Classification of sins by degree. [^]

Seen from the degrees, the Scripture itself distinguishes between serious and less serious sins. On the one hand, the Scriptures teach that every sin, because it is ἀνομία or rebellion against God, subjects one to condemnation, Gal. 3:10. On the other hand, the Scriptures clearly distinguish degrees in sinning. Thus Christ says of the Jews that they have μείζονα ἁμαρτίαν than Pilate, John 19:11.

1652) Cf. on this section [Der Lutheraner 34, 129](#) the article "Have a good conscience!" In pastoral practice we learn that, for example, when entering into marriages in forbidden degrees, the nupturients easily imagine they had a *conscientia recta*, while in fact, as not infrequently soon turns out, they had a *conscientia dubia*.

1653) Cf. Hengstenberg in the commentary on Psalms on this passage.

The children before the *anni discretionis* (אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָדְעוּ טוֹב וְרָע הַמָּה [HEBREW]) are less guilty than the old, Deut. 1:39: "Your sons, who today understand neither good nor evil, they shall enter [into the land]." It is scriptural teaching that when the will of God is known, it is more grievous to sin than when there is a lack of knowledge. "The servant who knows his Lord's will, and has not prepared himself, nor done according to His will, he shall suffer many stripes. But he that knoweth not, yet hath done that which is worthy of strokes, shall suffer few strokes. For to whom much is given, from him much will be sought, and to whom much is commanded, from him much will be required."

¹⁶⁵⁴⁾ Accordingly, the Scriptures also teach degrees of eternal punishments for sin.¹⁶⁵⁵⁾ The most serious sin is contempt for the gospel of grace or *sola gratia*. In the gospel of *sola gratia*, God reveals His very heart or will against the whole world of sin. He did not send His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him, John 3:17. The enmity against the gospel is sharply marked and steers into the path of the national sin of carnal Israel, when we ascribe to ourselves a greater righteousness or a lesser guilt before God after the process of the Pharisee in a comparison with other men. With this, the will of grace of God, which is *sola gratia*, is completely rejected. Therefore Paul, after his eyes were opened, calls himself a *πρώτος των αματωλων*,¹⁶⁵⁶⁾ and the Reformer of the Church warns himself and all who boast of the Christian name with these words:¹⁶⁵⁷⁾ "That Christ says: 'Let the first be last,' he takes away all presumption from you, and forbids you to exalt yourself above any harlot, if you were like Abraham, David, Peter, or Paul. But in that he saith: 'The last shall be first,' he defends thee from all despair, and forbids thee to exalt thyself among no saints, though thou be Pilate, Herod, Sodom, and Gomorrah."¹⁶⁵⁸⁾ The division of sins into *peccata cordis*, *oris*,

 1654) Luke 12:47, 48. 1655) Cf. vol. III, 615. 1656) 1 Tim. 1. 15.

1657) On the Gospel on the Sunday Septuagesima, [St. L. XI, 515](#).

1658) This does not contradict the scriptural statements in which a distinction is made between great and lesser sins. The doctrine teaches that all men are in the same total ruin, Eph. 2:1-5, Jn. 3:6. The doctrine further teaches, and Christians know it from experience, that

operis is usually, but not in every single case, a gradation. An unforgiveness quietly cherished in the heart can be a more serious sin than an evil word uttered or a work performed in a sudden surge of passion.¹⁶⁵⁹⁾

e. *Peccata mortalia et venalia.* [^]

Considered in terms of consequences, sins are divided into "mortal sins" and "venial sins." Mortal sins are those that are actually counted to death for the sinner. All the sins of unbelievers belong here. In the case of believers, that is, those who have already come to faith, we call those sins mortal sins which drive the Holy Spirit out of the heart, and in which faith in Christ cannot exist. Venial sins are those that deserve death in themselves, but are in fact forgiven continually to those who believe in Christ.¹⁶⁶⁰⁾ All sins of weakness of believers belong here, that is, sins that do not drive the Holy Spirit and therefore faith out of the heart. The Roman doctrines teach falsely that certain sins of fact are venial sins in themselves and do not deserve eternal but only temporal rebuke.¹⁶⁶¹⁾ The Calvinists also teach falsely that the elect do not lose faith and the Holy Spirit even in the case of *peccata enormia*.¹⁶⁶²⁾ Scholastics designated seven sins

nothing good dwells in their flesh and that they owe it solely to the grace of God if the corruption of original sin is not allowed to produce all its legitimate fruits in them, even to the point of eternal damnation. If we now, what we owe to God's preservation and grace alone, want to credit ourselves and consort with God on the basis of our lesser sin and guilt (in comparison with others), this is a senseless and direct rejection and mockery of the gospel of grace. Hence Luther's admonition above that we must not exalt ourselves before God above any harlot, etc., unless we wanted to become last from first.

1659) Thus Baier-Walther [II, 324](#).

1660) Cf. the [Fifth Petition](#) and Luther's explanation.

1661) The evidence from the Roman Catechism (II, 5, fr. 46) and from the Catechism of Bishop Henni (p. 75. 76); in [Günther, Symbolik 4, p. 155](#) [[Popular Symbolics](#), p. 168]. In this point, too, the Arminians teach essentially as Rome does in her *Confessio* VII, 6. Quoted in [Günther loc. cit. p. 156](#). In Quenstedt 1, 1048. [Baier-Walther II, 325 sq.](#) Cf. Luther's exposition in the Smalcald Articles (315, 21 ff. [[Trigl. 485, 21](#) ff. [☺](#)]) that Rome invented sins deserving only temporal punishment in order to keep the practice of satisfaction, indulgences and purgatory in operation.

1662) The evidence from the Dordrecht Resolutions and the *Confession of Faith* of the Presbyterians is printed vol. II, note 1304.


as mortal sins: *superbia, avaritia, luxuria, ira, gula, invidia, acedia*.¹⁶⁶³⁾ This list is misleading, because any sin that is held against the admonition of conscience can become a mortal sin.

f. Ruling and non-ruling sin. [^](#)

This division coincides with the division into mortal and venial sins. With unbelievers, sins always reign, even if individual sins are refrained from according to the outward work. All unbelievers are dead in sins and the devil is the ruling power with them.¹⁶⁶⁴⁾ The state in which sin does not reign is only found in believers Rom. 6:14: "Sin will not be able to reign over you, because you are not under the law, but under grace. Hence the admonition, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body!" Rom. 6:12.

g. Participation in other people's sins. [^](#)

A species of the *peccata actualia* is also the sin, whereby foreign sins make partakers. The Scripture explicitly warns against this sin, 1 Tim. 5:22: μη κοινωνῇ ἀμαρτίαις ἄλλοτρίαις ["Neither be partaker of other mens sins"]. It goes also specializing from individual cases. Whoever keeps fellowship with fellow believers or — what is the same — church fellowship with those who lead into false doctrines, that is, doctrines that deviate from the Word of God, participates in the sin of others, 2 John 11: "Whoever greets him [who does not bring the doctrine of Christ],¹⁶⁶⁵⁾ makes himself partaker of his evil works." To keep Christians from this sin, Paul instructs all Christians: ἐκκλίνετε ἀπ' αὐτῶν, namely, from all who depart from apostolic doctrine. We can also make ourselves partakers of others' sins by taking pleasure in our hearts in the evil that others do. Thus, Paul says in Rom. 1:32, when describing the recklessness of the heathen, that they themselves do not only commit the

1663) That *acedia* (ἀκηδία), the satiety in the Word of God, is rightly counted among the mortal sins is taken by Luther in the Large Catechism, p. 440, 99 ff. [[Trigl. 608, 99](#) 

1664) Eph. 2:1-3; Col. 1:13; Acts 26:18.

1665) Fraternal greetings and intercourse are forbidden, not kindness civil intercourse.

sins, but also σννευδοκοῦσιν τόις πράσσουσιν. This delight in the sins of others is most particularly aroused a. in reading such writings as are immoral in content, b. in reading such writings as glorify false doctrines and false teachers. The various ways in which we can partake of other people's sins have been summarized in the old Latin verse:

*Consulo, praecipio, consentio, provocho, laudo,
Non retego culpam, non punio, non reprehendo,
Non obsto, sed praecipio et defendo aliena.*¹⁶⁶⁶

["I counsel, teach, consent to, provoke, laud, do not reveal the guilt, do not punish, do not reprehend, do not resist, but teach and defend the sins of others."]

h. Heaven-crying sins (*peccata clamantia*). [△]

Certain sins cry out to God for public vengeance. The Scripture names as such sins the murder (Gen. 4:10), especially the murder of Christians (Rev. 6:9-10), the withholding of the wages due to the workers (Jam. 5:4), in general the oppression of those who cannot help themselves, whose need therefore cries out to God and calls on God to intervene. This includes the oppression of strangers, widows and orphans, the poor, those languishing in bondage, etc.¹⁶⁶⁷ Chemnitz:¹⁶⁶⁸ *In scholis vocant peccata clamantia, eo quod Scriptura dicat, illa peccata, etiam tacentibus hominibus, clamare ad Deum et expetere vindictam.* [[Google](#)] Chemnitz has. (with reference to Gen. 4:10; 18:20; Ex. 3:7; 22, 23; Jam. 5:4) also the old memorial verse:

*Clamitat ad coelum vox sanguinis et Sodomorum,
Vox oppressorum mercesque retenta laborum.*

["To heaven cries the voice of the blood and of the Sodomites, The voice of the oppressed and the withheld wage of the laborers."] At the same time, we do not lose sight of the fact that unbelief, which is held towards the Savior of the world, is and remains the greatest and most serious sin.¹⁶⁶⁹ We can call it *peccatum clamantissimum*. Christ rebuked the unbelief of the Pharisees, who wanted to defend the Hosanna at his entry into Jerusalem, with the words: "I tell you that, if these should hold their peace

¹⁶⁶⁶) In Chemnitz, *Loci* I, 258; [Baier-Walther II, 322](#). Here, biblical examples are also given for the different ways. The *non retego culpam* is of course meant for the case when calling and duty demands the disclosure of guilt. Otherwise, Prov. 11:13 applies. For information on when publishers and booksellers participate in the sins of others, cf. [Der Lutheraner 27, 172](#) ff.

¹⁶⁶⁷) Cf. scriptural passages like Ex. 22:21-24; Is. 3:14-15; Ex. 3:7-9 etc.

¹⁶⁶⁸) *Loci* I, 258. ¹⁶⁶⁹) Jn. 16:9; 15:22

the stones would immediately cry out."¹⁶⁷⁰) When dogmatists place *peccata non clamantia* next to *peccata clamantia*, they do not want to teach a class of "blameless sins" (as the newer ones do), but rather point out that God, according to his grace and long-suffering, delays his judgment on sin because he wants to leave room for repentance, or because the measure of sins is not yet full according to divine reckoning, Gen. 15:16. As far as Christians in particular are concerned, they thank God that there is *peccata non clamantia*. On the one hand, they know and experience that even in them there is still an army of sins that truly deserve God's wrath and eternal damnation. On the other hand, they know that these sins no longer cry out to God for vengeance inasmuch as they are daily and abundantly forgiven because they have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, who is justified and the complete propitiation for their sin, so that they pray with confidence of hearing: "Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquity!" Ps. 51:11.

i. The sin against the Holy Spirit. [^]

In the division of sins into those for which repentance is still possible (*peccata irremissibilia*) and those for which repentance is excluded (*peccata irremissibilia*), only one sin remains for the latter class, the sin against the Holy Spirit.

The scriptures that deal with this sin (*sedes doctrinae*) are Matt. 12:22-32 and the parallels Mark. 3:22-30; Luke 12:10. 1 Jn. 5:16 is also rightly referred to the sin against the Holy Spirit. In these passages the sin against the Holy Spirit is distinguished from all other sins and described as such that will not be forgiven. Matt. 12:31: "All sin and blasphemy is forgiven men, η δε τον πνεύματος βλασφημία ούκ άφεθήσεται. The uniqueness of this sin, is still more emphasized by the fact that it is also distinguished from the sin against the Son of God. Matt. 12:32: "Whosoever shall speak aught against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever shall speak aught κατά του πνεύματος τον άγιον, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." Likewise Mark. 3:28-29: "All sins are forgiven to men, και βλασφημίαι δσας αν βλασφημήσωσιν [even those

1670) Luke 19:40; cf. Heb 12:22-25.

blasphemies as much as they, δαας, may blaspheme]; but whosoever blasphemeth the Holy Spirit hath no remission for ever, but is guilty of everlasting judgment." Likewise Luke 12:10, 1 Jn. 5:16 a distinction is made between sin ου πρὸς θάνατον and sin πρὸς θάνατον, distinguished in such a way that in the case of sin "not unto death" intercession is taken for granted, but in the case of sin unto death the duty of intercession is clearly dispensed with; ου περὶ ἐκείνης λέγω ἵνα ἐρωτήσῃ. Therefore, in the case of sin unto death, it is not to be thought of unbelievers for whom intercession is obligatory (1 Tim. 2:1, 4; First and Second Petition, Christ's and Stephen's example). Furthermore, it is not to be thought of such persons within a Christian congregation who were revealed as apostates and therefore had to be excluded or excommunicated from the congregation. Intercession is to be made for them, because excommunication is a last sharp means to bring the apostates to repentance and to lead them to salvation, 1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 2:6-11. Since it is expressly said here with regard to the sin πρὸς θάνατον that one does not need to make intercession in this case, we cannot avoid finding here a designation of the sin against the Holy Spirit.¹⁶⁷¹⁾

What, then, is the sin against the Holy Spirit, or what is its nature (*forma*), as distinguished from all other sins? a. It does not consist in *impenitence* to the end (*impoenitentia finalis*). The great multitude of men die in unbelief, and yet the Scriptures do not say of them that they have committed the sin against the Holy Spirit. b. Nor does the sin against the Holy Spirit consist in every resistance to the efficacy of the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, all men who hear or read the gospel would commit the sin against the Holy Spirit, because they all, according to their natural state, consider the gospel to be foolishness and therefore resist until they have become non-resisters through the action of the Holy Spirit in the Word. c. Nor does the sin against the Holy Spirit consist in the blasphemy of the truth as a result of spiritual blindness. Paul confesses of himself that out of ignorance, in unbelief was

1671) So also Luther in his "Sermon von der Sünde wider den Holy Spirit" (from 1529; [St. L. X, 1205](#)) and most dogmatists.

"a blasphemer and a persecutor and a taunter" (βλάσφημος καὶ διώκτης καὶ υβριστής); but nevertheless mercy befell him, 1 Tim. 1:13. Also the denial of the truth out of fear and other affects, as with Peter, is not the sin against the Holy Spirit. Peter was also converted again, Luke 22:61-62. The situation was different with the Pharisees who came from Jerusalem, from whose behavior the Savior takes cause to warn against the sin against the Holy Spirit. These Pharisees could not escape the powerful impression of the miracle performed any more than the people, of whom it is said, "And all the people were removed with terror (ἐξίσταντο), saying: Is not this David's son?" Matt. 12:22. But though those Pharisees were inwardly convinced of the divinity of the miracle, yet they blasphemed it with the highest blasphemy that there is: they declared it to be the devil's work. They said, "He does not cast out devils except by Beelzebub, the chief of the devils," Matt. 12:24. This is followed by Christ's warning against the one great sin that is not forgiven in distinction from all other sins. After this we will have to say: The sin against the Holy Spirit is committed when the Holy Spirit inwardly convinces a man of the divine truth and the man nevertheless not only rejects the recognized truth, but also blasphemes. This is summarized, for example, in Hollaz's description of this sin: ¹⁶⁷²⁾ *Peccatum in Spiritum Sanctum est veritatis divinae evidenter agnitae et in conscientia approbatae malitiosa abnegatio, hostilis impugnatio, horrenda blasphematio et omnium mediorum salutis obstinata et finaliter perseverans reiectio.* [Google]¹⁶⁷³⁾ Therefore, in describing the sin against the Holy Spirit, we correctly say that it is *peccatum in officium Spiritus Sancti*, that is, a willing and determined going against the inner conviction wrought by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it is also specifically distinguished from the address against the Son of God, that is, against the Person of the Son of God. [Ed. — English ed. References Walther's Law and Gospel, Thesis XXIV, p. 393.]

1672) *Examen, P. II, cap. IV, De Pecc. Act., qu. 38.*


1673) Luther distinguishes in the mentioned "Sermon", X, 1203, between the still "hidden Holy Spirit", as with Paul before the conversion, and the "revealed Holy Spirit", as it inwardly convincingly came into activity with the Pharisees. "Here the Holy Spirit is manifest and uncovered, bursting forth and shining like lightning, so that its radiance penetrates the heart . . . Such things were called in times past impugnationem veritatis agnitae."

A number of questions have followed on from this.

Does the sin against the Holy Spirit still occur today? Arminians have denied this and said that this sin is limited to the apostolic time.¹⁶⁷⁴⁾ We must answer the question in the affirmative because the scriptural passages Matt. 12, etc. are general and do not imply that this sin was limited to the time of Christ and the apostles. They are undoubtedly words of warning that are to be heeded until the Last Day.

If the sin against the Holy Spirit still occurs today, is it possible to know in *concreto*, that is, looking at the individual person, who has committed this sin? The practical importance of answering this question, both for the individual Christian and for pastoral practice, is obvious. The sin against the Holy Spirit is the sin of which it has been rightly said: those who have not committed it very often think that they have committed it, and torment themselves with it to the point of despair; those who have actually committed it do not worry about it, as this brings with it the extreme hardening which is a concomitant of this sin. He who worries about the sin or sins which make him fear that he has committed the sin against the Holy Spirit, and who has a desire in him that he may not be excluded from the forgiveness which Christ has purchased by his blood, there is in him, as this worry and desire clearly proves, a mighty work of the Holy Spirit. He stands in the faith. Very correctly, the Formula of Concord says:¹⁶⁷⁵⁾ "Those who feel and sense a little spark and longing for God's grace and eternal salvation in their hearts" can and should know "that God has kindled this beginning of true godliness in their hearts and will further strengthen them in great weakness and help them to persevere in true faith to the end." The Formula of Concord provides irrefutable scriptural proof of this by stating that a desire for God's grace in Christ is not found in the natural human heart, but is in every case God's working in "devout Christians." Most Lutheran dogmatists therefore hold that the

1674) Thus Episcopius in *Resp. ad 64 qu*, 14; quoted in Quenstedt I, 1072.

1675) M. 591, 14. [[Trigl. 885, 14](#) ,]

Italian jurist [Francesco Spiera](#) († 1548) did not commit the sin against the Holy Spirit, but died in despair, because he thought to have committed this sin. Thus [Quenstedt](#) I, 1064: *Spiera pro peccatore in Spiritum Sanctum minime habendus est, quia 1. non ex malitia, sed infirmitate, non εκουσίως et sponte, sed persuasus ab amicis defecit ad papatum. 2. Non impugnavit aut blasphemavit doctrinam evangelii, sed summe doluit, quod a veritate defecerit. Fuit ergo desperatio quidem, sed non blasphemia in Spiritum Sanctum, ut ait b. Meisnerus; vel ex sola opinione istius peccati.* [[Google](#)] Even if this does not fully describe the case of Spiera, which has become historical, we consider Quenstedt's judgment to be correct.¹⁶⁷⁶⁾ — As for the recognizability of the sin against the Holy Spirit in the concrete case, two things are to be kept in mind: a. Let no one be hasty (*temere*) in ascribing this sin to themselves. [Luther](#) is also very careful here. One should take care "that no one falls into such sin so soon, for the sake of some poor weighted consciences, whom the devil drives to despair, that they themselves cause them to sin in vain."¹⁶⁷⁷⁾ b. On the other hand, those who claim that this sin cannot be recognized in any case also go too far. From 1 John 5:16 a double thing is evident: 1. Sin occurs and is recognizable because it dispenses with intercession, εστιν ἁμαρτία πρὸς ὕψαντον, ον περὶ ἐκείνης λέγω να ἐρωτήση. 2. Whereas John speaks in the plural before and after, describing a knowledge common to all Christians, he uses the singular in v. 16: "so someone sees," ἴαν τις ᾔδη. This describes a special case and indicates that the distinction between sin "not unto death" and "unto death" is a perception and knowledge limited to individuals, such as the pastor or individual Christians who have the gift of discernment of spirits before others.

 1676) The case of Spiera is described RE.² XIV, 799 ff, in Meusel VI, 354, but not with consistently correct theological judgment. Thus RE. op. cit. p. 801 says: "Spiera had played a sacrilegious game with the Word of God and His knowledge, otherwise he could not have denied so easily and so quickly." Consider how quickly Peter fell from fear of man and death. The calling on Calvin's judgment should also have been omitted, because Calvin, in his denial of God's general will of grace, cannot have the right judgment at all about sin against the Holy Spirit.

1677) "Sermon," [X, 1209](#).


Most Lutheran theologians assume that only the born-again can commit the sin against the Holy Spirit, although Quenstedt in his *θέσις* expresses himself cautiously:¹⁶⁷⁶⁾ *Nobis probabilior videtur eorum sententia, qui solis vere renatis, iustificatis et renovatis peccatum in Spiritum Sanctum adscribunt.* [[Google](#)] Others (Baier, Balthasar Meisner, Feurborn) want to leave open the possibility that also unregenerate can commit this sin, namely in the moment in which the Holy Spirit wanted to convert them. In any case, the inwardly convincing effect of the Holy Spirit must be thought of as antecedent, which lies in the expression *εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ἁγίου, κατὰ τὸν πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου*.

4 The passages Hebr. 6:4-8 and ch. 10:26-27 can only be harmonized with Matt. 12, etc., because they clearly deny the possibility of repentance to any willing (εκονοίως) sinner who had once received the knowledge of the truth and tasted the heavenly gift. As for Heb. 12:17 concerns, where it is said of Esau: *μετάνοιας τόπον οὐκ εἶρεν, καίπερ μετὰ δακρύων ἐκζητήσας ἀντήν*, the view has more in its favor than against it, that here the address is not of Esau's repentance, but of his father Isaac's change of mind with respect to the blessing of the firstborn. The attempted change of the father's mind with tears is reported in Gen. 27:34 ff.

How does the fact that the sin against the Holy Spirit is not forgiven correspond to the other fact that Christ has acquired forgiveness for all sins, thus also for the sin against the Holy Spirit? Scripture-inconsistent solutions to this difficulty are found among Calvinists as well as among Papists and Synergists. Calvinists finally come back to the solution that God's will of grace and Christ's merit do not extend to all men, but only to a part of them. Among the men whom God did not want to make saved at all and whom Christ did not reconcile with God, sinners against the Holy Spirit also belong. The solution is wrong, because according to the Scriptures Christ is the propitiation (ἱλασμός) for all the sin of the world, 1 John 2:2. In connection with this,

1678) *Systema* I, 1060.

the effectiveness of the Holy Spirit does not extend to those who are lost, especially to sinners against the Holy Spirit. That this is a human invention is already evident from the description of the sin against the Holy Spirit. This sin, according to the Scriptures, consists precisely in maliciously setting oneself against the inwardly convincing efficacy of the Holy Spirit. Roman theologians solve the difficulty from another side. They think that sinners against the Holy Spirit belong to the class of those who have failed to acquire the merit necessary for attaining salvation. The synergists of all shades, too, finally conclude that, as in the case of unbelievers and the hardened in general, so also in the case of sinners against the Holy Spirit, there was a lack of the achievement of self-determination, of the reduction of reluctance and of the guilt of sin necessary for conversion and salvation on their part. That this cooperation for conversion and attainment of salvation is a fictitious factor is taught by Christ precisely in his warning against sinning against the Holy Spirit. Indeed, Christ teaches that all men remain in the power and under the dominion of the devil until the stronger one, Christ, comes upon him and snatches the robbery from him. In short, we must also say in regard to the sin against the Holy Spirit: a. That it does not come to this sin is merely God's grace and not founded in any named good nature or performance of man, b. That it comes to sin against the Holy Spirit is merely man's fault and not founded in any lack of God's grace and Christ's merit, or in any lack of the Holy Spirit's action. We do not get beyond *sola gratia Dei* on the one hand and *sola culpa hominis* on the other. We already reach this result if we stop at the sin of hardening. The Formula of Concord reminds us:¹⁶⁷⁹⁾ "One is hardened, blinded, given to a perverse mind; another, as well in the same guilt, is again converted. In these and similar questions Paul sets a certain goal for us, how far we should go, namely that we should recognize God's judgment in one part. For they are well deserved punishments of sins, ... that we

1679) M. 716, 57 ff. [[Trigl. 1081, 57](#) 

may live in the fear of God, knowing and praising God's goodness without and against our merit in and with us, to whom he gives and leaves his Word, whom he does not reject and repudiate." And what Christian, when he reflects on himself, would dare to say: "That sin against the Holy Spirit does not occur in me, for that the decisive reason lies in me! That is why Luther says in his "Sermon":¹⁶⁸⁰⁾ "Let us pray that we do not fall into sin, if we do not want to suffer the revealed truth; for there is no further counsel, nor help, nor excuse, and the wrath of God has finally begun." And at the end of the "Sermon" again: "May God keep us from such sin!"

Conclusion. Only one thing saves from the temptation of having committed sin against the Holy Spirit. Heart, mind and thoughts must be directed to the completely general and completely free grace of God in Christ, which is *sole clarius* revealed in the Scriptures. Incompetent pastors in this case are the papists and synergists as well as the Calvinists. The Reformed theologian Schneckenburger proves conclusively that a Calvinist must first become Lutheran before he can save someone from the temptation of having committed the sin against the Holy Spirit¹⁶⁸¹⁾ Therefore, *universalem gratiam* and *solam gratiam* must be kept separate, as will be further explained in the first section of the next volume.

1680) [op. cit.](#), 1206., [1209](#).

1681) *Vergleichende Darstellung des luth. u. ref. Lehrbegriffs* I, 260 ff.: "One can only refer with Luther to the objective merit of Christ, to the promise of the Word of God, and to the faithfulness of the calling, who will not abandon the work begun, but will preserve it for us. This, of course, will only suffice if the Reformed pious person can put it out of his mind that the merit of Christ, etc., does not concern everyone, perhaps does not concern him in particular."